

THE
REVIEW:

O R,

A Representation of the Late

Sufferings & Condition

OF THE

DISSENTERS.

Written some Years since, but not then
Suffer'd to come Abroad.

Now PUBLISH'D,

As well to Encrease their *Gratitude* to
the KING, for delivering them
from all those *Calamities*, as to ex-
cite them to Joyn vigorously in all
Lawful Means that may conduce to
the *prevention* of their falling un-
der the *like*, or worse Severities
hereafter.

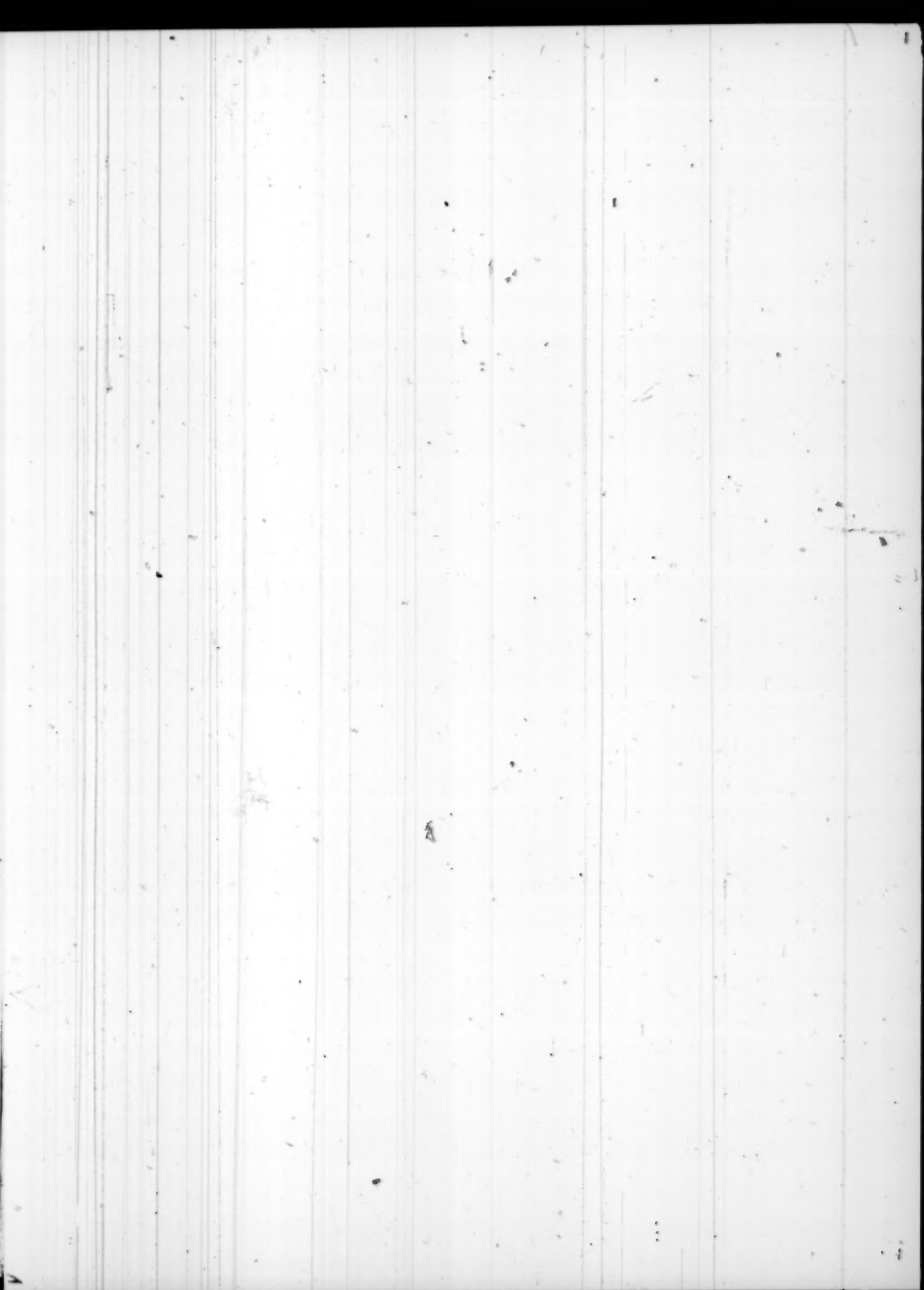
Piscator iſtus Sapit.

L O N D O N,

Printed, and are to be Sold by R. Baldwin, 1687.

113

C





An Advertisement to the READERS,

IT is absolutely necessary you should take notice, That the following Papers were more than prepared for the Press several Years ago; But the high Church-men to their other rigorous Usages, had added that of Stopping our Mouths; and nothing was reckon'd a greater Crime in a Dissenter, than his Endeavours (how modestly soever) to Remonstrate that he was Innocent, and their Prosecutions against him no less unreasonable than violent.

Of this Mr. De Laun's Case was a terrifying Instance; who, only for writing a Sober and very respectful Answer, unto a Doctor of the Church of England's importunate Challenge, to all Dissenters, to come forth and shew why they did not Conform, was clapt up in Newgate, Fined far beyond his Ability, and could obtain no Discharge from his tedious Imprisonment, untill the Sovereign Lord Chief Justice of Heaven and Earth was pleas'd to remove him into a better World.

Thus they first Gagg'd us, and then Triumph'd and Reproach'd us, That we were Sullen, and would not speak, or had nothing to say for our selves; Whereas indeed it was matter enough for a Second leverer Lash, if we did but humbly whisper, That we knew not wherein we had offended, so as justly to deserve the first. Nay, sometimes tho we spoke not a word, we were cruelly Scourged, (as the fierce Monsieur did his Boy) meerly for Tinking.

'Tis no wonder, if such a dismal Scene of Affairs, scar'd these modest Papers from appearing abroad, during its Continuance; and oblig'd them to take Shelter in a private Recess, where they had lain buried by Oblivion, if an Auspicious Ray, had not lately invit'd them into the publique Light.

For as Marriners that have happily escap'd Shipwrack, take some pleasure when arriv'd on the safe Shore, to look on the still-threatening Ocean; and recount both the Dangers they were in, and what means they made use of to avoid the fury of the Storm: So, since it has pleas'd God in his wonderful Providence to Inspire our present Sovereign with milder thoughts, and that He has graciously vouchsaf'd to knock

To the Readers.

off all Conscience-shackles, by asserting that Generous Christian Principle, That none ought to be forced in matters of meer Religion; I thought the publishing of this well penn'd Discourse might not yet be altogether unuseful; since it both gives an Account of some of those Reasons why many sober Persons would not Conform to the Church of Englands Establishment; And of the heavy Pressures they then suffer'd on that score. As also of the fair Overtures and peaceable Resolutions they faithfully made in that day of their Distress. And how little all this was regarded by those, who in spite of Christianity, Reason, and the most submissive Applications, would still proceed in a ruinous Course of Destroying (as far as in them lay) all, whose Consciences could not comply with what they thought fit to impose.

Who the Author was or is, I have not been able to Discover, but the Work it self speaks him to be both a Master of Style, and of a Judicious Piety; On whose behalf I thought it necessary to premise thus much; That, understanding for what Season the Book was Calculated, you may the better Excuse diverse Expressions relating to those Times, which may not seem so proper for this Juncture, wherein 'tis made publike: And withal, to intreat your Pardon for the numerous (and sometimes gross) Errata's of the Press, which the difficulty of an unknown Hand, and other Accidents, rendred almost unavoidable.

That there may never be any more Ground for such Complaints and Expostulations; That those who occasion'd them, may repent of their Unchristian Practises therein; And that those that made them, may by their holy peaceable Conversations, Improve and perpetuate the unexpected Blessings, they at present Enjoy; is a Prayer, wherein no Serious well-disposed Christian, can refuse to joyn, with

Your Friend

The Publisher.

The Introduction.

1. **W**HEN the Servants and Disciples of the Son of God, were Slandered, Reproached and Persecuted by the Jews and Heathens, in the first Age of Christianity, they thought it a Duty owing to Themselves, their Religion and the Holy God that was the Author of it, to wipe off those Slanders and Imputations, and to maintain and defend their Innocency against the Injustice and Cruelty of their Persecutors. St. Paul vindicates himself, sundry times from the Calumnies and Slanders of the Jews, as is evident in the Acts of the Apostles, and several Apologetical Discourses, may be read in his Epistles, as also in those of St. Peter. The Apologies that were written by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Athenagoras on the behalf of Christians, are still Extant, known and read by learned Men: Of the same Nature are Cyprian to Demetrianus, Augustin de Civitate dei. Arnobius contra Gentes.

2. We do not remember that we have either heard or read that they were denied the Liberty of Complaining, or asserting their Innocency, and the barbarous Injustice, of their Persecutors. Those that Prosecuted them were Persons sufficiently Inhumane, yet they never forbid, or punished them, for avowing their own Integrity, or groaning under the Rods, wherewith they made them bleed. 'Twas never Penal to be Sensible of their infelicities, nor to affirm themselves Upright, when they were Treated as Transgressors.

3. 'Tis not our purpose to affirm our Sufferings, equal with those of the Primitive Christians, or that we have the same Reasons of

Complaint. We do readily acknowledg, that our Calamities are as much Inferiour to theirs, as are our Piety and our Virtues; and the comparision as Unequal on the one part as the other. But though these be not Equally great, with these of those Eminent and very Holy Persons: we think them severe enough to justify a Complaint and unreasonable enough to allow an Accusation.

4. That our State and Condition is Calamitous can't be denied. Almost all the Cities, Towns and Villages, in England, with witness can affirm it; All the Prisons, Courts and Tribunals in the Land will give their Suffrage to it; and they must live in great Privacy and Retirement, that do not sufficiently understand it, from their own knowledg and observation.

5. All manner of evil Things, are reported concerning us, and there is almost nothing Impious and Infamous, which is not laid to our Charge. The many Books and Pamphlets that are written; the many Sermons that are preached, before Judges, Magistrates, and Persons in Authority and Office; the daily Libels that the Press doth Spawn, on purpose to defame, and make us an abhorrence, are such evidence of it, as cannot be gainsaid.

6. Our Case being such, we will take the liberty that was permitted to the Christians of Old; and hope we may do it with Impunity, we will presume that we may have Licence, to groan under our burdens, and express the sense we have, of the weight and uneasiness of them; we can't but feell the Severities that are exercis'd towards us, nor can we be without some Resentments of those horrid and mischievous Imputations, that with impudence, and face of Brals, are^d said to our Prejudice, and disadvantage. We will therefore, complaine of the Impositions and Burdens, that lye upon us; we will Expostulate with our Persecutors; we will in most Humble and Prostrate manner make our Supplications before them; and lastly avow our Innocency, and purposes of Perseverance therein, and this we intend to do, very briefly, and with a becoming Modesty, Freedom and Candour.

C H A P. I

The DISSENTERS *Complaints.*

(To speak at first once for all, Take notice that I charge not every Church of England man with Malignancy, or such a Spirit of Persecution, nor that I go about to vindicate every single Dissenter.)

S E C T. I.

1. **T**HE Terms of *Communion* imposed upon our Ministers and required of us, are of *unnecessary nature, uncertain truth, and though true, yet impossible to be submitted to, by many, with understanding and judgment.* Those among us that are *Clergy-Men*, are obliged in all publick *holy Offices and Administrations*, to wear the *Surplice*, Baptize with *Godfathers*, and the *Sign of the Cross*, give the Sacrament *kneeling*, and deny it to all such as refuse to receive it in that *Gesture*. But what necessity is there of these things? Were they imposed by *Jesus Christ* or his *Apostles*? Did *St. Paul* wear a *Surplice*, or *St. Peter* Baptize with the *Sign of the Cross*. Are these things *Essential* to Christian Religion? Cannot the Churches of God in this Nation, yea, cannot the Church of England subsist without the use and practice of them? If any man think so, let him enjoy his *Opinion*, we are not like to be his Converts. There were Churches in being before these things were known or observed, and we are of the mind there may be again when the use and memory of them may fail upon Earth.

2. The Minister that Conforms, is bound to affirm it *certain* by God's Word, That Children dying after *Baptism*, before the Communion of *Actual Sin*, are certainly *saved*. Now that *some Children* so dying are certainly *saved*, we do heartily believe. We think, that the *Promise* is made to *Believers and their Seed*; and that the Children of *Believing Parents* that dye before actual sin are *saved*. But whether the Children of *Atheists, Papists, Infidels and Heathens* that are Baptized, and expire before *actual Transgressions*, are immediately advanced into the Kingdom and Presence of God, and Conversation of the *Blessed*, is a thing of which we are not certain, nor can we find any Proof of it in the Gospel. In the mean time we do not pretend to condemn, or judge concerning them. We leave them to God who is their Judge, and will deal righteously by them, and all this World besides.

3. That

3. That all the *Heathens* are damned, is *Virtually* asserted in the *Thirty Nine Articles*, (which all that are admitted to minister in holy things must subscribe) but of this we are not very sure, and we think that we have read that *Justin Martyr* and some others of the Fathers were of other apprehensions in that Case: And there are some in this Age, as well as in those which have preceded, that have entertained some hopes of the *Salvation* of some of them. Mr. *Humsfrey* hath said many things with great consideration and judgment in favour of that Opinion, in his *peaceable Disquisitions*. And we do avow to all the World, that we do believe, that no man can be sure of their universal Damnation; and that to our apprehension 'tis more likely, that *Antoninus*, *Epicureus*, *Plato*, *Plotinus*, and many others are in Heaven, than many of those that have been reputed Saints, and placed among the Blessed there. Not that any are saved without a *Saviour*, or sanctified without the Influences of the *Holy Ghost*. We do firmly believe, that there is no Name under Heaven given unto Men whereby they may be saved, but the Name of *Jesus of Nazareth*; but as there are many persons that do receive gifts of mercy, kindness and benevolence from unknown hands, so we humbly conceive the *Heathens* may receive pardon of sin from an unknown *Saviour*, and a holy and regenerate Nature from an unknown *holy Spirit*.

4. That the *Church* hath power to appoint *Ceremonies*, is also affirmed in the *Articles* thereof, but we see nothing that proves the indefinite truth of that Proposition. If by *Ceremonies* are meant the necessary circumstances of action, and as are by consequence, and involution commanded in, and with those actions and duties wherewithal they are involved we do easily grant it. But if thereby you mean Rites that are exhibitiv of *Grace*, yea, or significations of *Duty*, we must demur a little, for we think Christ *Jesus* the Law-giver of his Church, and that he hath given Laws enough for its Constitution and Administration. Besides we desire to know of what Extent this Power of the Church is, and what are the Limits of it: If it hath no Limits, then it may introduce a Yoke upon Christians, much more insupportable than what was laid upon the Jews; and yet that was such, (the Apostles affirm) as neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear, *Acts* 15. If it hath any bounds, we would fain understand who hath fixed, or who must determine them. If it be said that God hath set, and established them in his Word we do willingly assent unto it, and add farther that by the perfection and sufficiency of his Laws, we think he hath determined it to a Point, for to what purpose a needless and useless Power (and such it must be if Christ's Law be perfect) should be granted to the

Church, we can not understand. If it be said that the *Church* it self must fix the *bounds* of its *Power*, 'tis much the same as if it were utterly without any. For 'tis to be supposed that they will affirm, that how numerous soever their *Ceremonious* Impositions be they go not beyond their power, and so farewell all Christian Liberty. Christ Jesus hath only purchased an Exchange, but no Freedom from a *Yoke of Bondage*. And truly we think the Exchange is to our prejudice, for 'tis more eligible to bear the burthen and imposition that a *wise* and *righteous* God doth lay upon us, than those that are laid upon us by *foolish* and sometimes *impious* and *wicked* men.

5. 'Tis said in the beginning of the *Athanasian Creed*, that *whosoever will be saved* must believe the *Catholick Faith*, and that *whosoever* doth not keep it *whole and undefiled*, without *doubt* shall *perish everlastingly*: and in the conclusion 'tis determined, that if a man doth not faithfully believe the Doctrine thereof he cannot be saved. Which Doctrine, as also the damnatory Sentences affixed unto it must be subscribed by all that will serve God in the Work of Preaching the Gospel with the licence and favour of Authority. We do very vehemently assert the Deity of our *Saviour*; and that he is both God and Man in one Person; and that one in three, and three in one is of the *Essence* of Christianity. But whether all that do not believe it in the sense and explication of *Athanasius* are certainly damned, seems to us very uncertain, and we are unwilling to avow the truth of it, lest we should condemn the Generation of the Just. We do believe that many thousands of Christians were saved before that *Creed* was known in the World; and we do not doubt but many might and would be saved though it should perish from among Men. We think it sufficient that the Doctrine of the Trinity, and Union of the *Divine* and *Humane* Natures in the Person of our Lord Jesus, be believed in those general and indefinite Terms under which 'tis expressed in the *Holy Scriptures*, and that whosoever believes it so (supposing him otherwise qualified for it) will certainly be saved; though he should not understand (as few plain Christians do) nor believe the Explanations of *Athanasius*.

6. Whether the *Explanatory* Doctrine of the Creed called by his Name (though written some Ages since his Death, as is thought by some learned Men) be *punctually true* we will not affirm, but this we will say, that if it be true, 'tis impossible that many, if not most, that do subscribe and avow the truth of it, should do it with understanding and conviction of judgment, and conscience. The Doctrine of the *Trinity* and *Personal Union*, according as 'tis there delivered, is Matter of such abstruse speculations, and Ministers matter for so many *objections*,

jections, not easily to be answered, that we think it a mighty difficulty, for any man with Judgment and Satisfaction of mind, to subscribe to it, and impossible for those many unstudied Novices that take Holy Orders, and enter into the Church. They have neither *Parts* nor *Patience*, nor *preparatory Learning* and *Knowledge*, for the contemplation of so *sublime* a *Theory*; and there is no man that hath, with any seriousness, applied himself to such *Meditations* (we think) that will not easily conceive it.

7. 'Tis said in the Book of Ordination, that by reading old *Authors* and *Writers of the Church*, 'tis evident that there have been, even from the daies of the *Apostles*, three Orders in the Church, viz. *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*. Whether this Doctrine be true is not the business of these *Papers* to determine; but we will be so bold as to affirm that we think it scarcely possible, that most of those that do acknowledg the truth of it, should do it with judgment and steady assurance of mind. There are men of good *Learning*, *Reading*, *Age*, and *Consideration*, that have professed great uncertainty and irresolution in the point. When they read what *Jerome* saies in his Commentaries on *Titus*, and in his *Epistle to Evagrius*, and other places of his Writings, they are ready to embrace a *Presbyterian* parity, and acknowledg no *Prelation* between *Bishops* and *Priests*, but what is either by consent or humane *Laws* and *Constitutions*. When they read other passages in that same Author, wherein he seems to contradict himself, they are inclined to acknowledge a *prelatical Episcopacy*. When they read the *Epistles* of *Ignatius* and *Cyprian*, they cannot deny a *Prelacy*: but whether it be a *Prelacy* in one and the same particular Church, or in and over the *Presbyters* of many Churches; and whether it be a *Divine* or *Humane* Appointment, they are not very much assured. And if those that have read and considered the point, cannot satisfy their minds, or come to a determination about it, how is it possible that such as never read, or thought almost any thing on that Subject (and such are most that enter the *Sacred Office*) can with Judgment and conviction of Conscience, subscribe the truth of it.

8. We have not here set down all those things that we think unnecessary, uncertain, and impossible to be consented to, with a satisfied understanding, in the terms of *Communion*, required by this Church, for then we must have written a *Volume*, whereas we intend only a few sheets. We have proposed some very few Examples, from amongst the many that might have been produced, had it consisted with our designed brevity. Whoever shall apply himself to the Consideration of them, will easily observe many others of like kind.

SECT. II.

1. **T**HE Forms of *Subscription* and *Fenunciation* that are required of us, are expressed in words too bold, indefinite, *peremptory*, and *dogmatical*. By the *Six and Thirtieth Canon*, all that are admitted to the Sacred Office are obliged *willingly* and *ex animo* to subscribe, That the *Book of Common Prayer*, and of *ordering Bishops, Priests and Deacons*, contain nothing contrary to the word of God; and that they *allow* and *acknowledg* the *Book of Articles*, being in number 39, to be agreeable to the Word of God. Betwixt Truth and Falshood there is no *medium*, that we know or understand. What is not contrary to the Word of God is of equal truth with it. What is agreeable therunto, is as indisputable as the inspired Volumes. And *what* is this we pray, but to advance the Opinions and Determinations, the Books and Writings of solid men, to an equality of truth, with those that were written by the Inspiration and direction of the Holy Ghost.

2. We do profess, that we do not see, how *Subscription* can be made to any Translation of the *Holy Scriptures* in that Form of Words; for that there is *nothing* in *any*, even in the *best* Translations, contrary to the *Original Text*, or that all things in any one of them are agreeable therunto, is we think a very bold and daring Assertion: Yea, we will add thus much farther, that we know not how any man can affirm concerning the *Original it self*, that it contains nothing contrary to what was written by the *inspired Authors*. That the *Greek and Hebrew* Copies have received no *change* or *variations*, is we think *impossible* to be proved; and those that shall compare the most *Ancient* Translations with the present *Original Copies*, will find, that if they had not read *otherwise* than *now* we do, it were *impossible* they should have *Translated* as they did. For proof of this, we must refer the Reader to *Ludovicus Cappelleus* his *Critica*, and *Father Simon* on that Subject, whose Book is lately Translated into the *English Tongue*. In the mean while, we intend not to disparage or invalidate the Authority of the *Original Text*. We do with very great assurance affirm, that the variations that may have happened therein, are not *material*, and that the *faith* and *manners*, the *hope* and *salvation* of men, can suffer no *prejudice*, nor run no *bazzards* thereby.

S E C T. III.

1. **W**E are not permitted to make *explications*, nor to declare our *sense* of the Subscriptions, Declarations, and Oaths that are imposed upon us. They are formed in *Ambiguous Words*, and such as are capable of *sundry acceptations*, but in which of them we *understand*, and could *take*, and *submit* unto them, we are not *allowed to say*. They must be *swallowed* in the lump, without any chewing. No *sense of favour* may be put upon them, though *sense* be sufficient to search the *Government*, and agreeable to the *Laws of the Land*.

2. That the *Conformable Gentry and Clergy* (we mean such as are men of *conscience* and *consideration*) do put a *favourable sense* and *interpretation* upon them, we are sufficiently assured by their *Books*, and the *Conversation* we have with some of them. And so *favourable, candid and engenuous*, is the *sense* they give of them, that might we be permitted to *declare* it, we *our selves*, at least very many of us, could submit unto them; but this is a *favour* that is not allowed us, 'tis an *indulgence* that hath not been granted us, nor for ought that we can *perceive*, is like to be.

3. Were we satisfied that we might take the required *Subscriptions, Declarations* and *Oaths* in our own *sense*, without declaring our *explication*, we might long since many of us have been *Conformists*, or might be suddenly so, but that is a thing in which we cannot be assured. If such a *Liberty* be taken we think the *Imposition*, and requiring of them will be of little *use*, or *signification*, because it is no great difficulty by *Interpretations*, and mollifying *expositions* in our minds, to enervate the *force*, and void the *obligation of all the Oaths and Subscriptions* in the World.

4. We know, that there is a *mean* betwixt a *rigorous, strict, severe*, and a *loose, vagous and licentious Interpretation*; but we do also know that 'tis no easie manner to find it; and that all men that may be concerned in such things, are not skilled in *splitting hairs*, or *dividing Atoms*, that persons of *tender and scrupulous Consciences*, will be everlastingly zealous lest they should *poise* the *Golden Mean*, and embrace the *loose and vagous sense* and *exposition*.

3. If this *scrupulosity* of Conscience be a Fault, 'tis such as very good men are liable unto, and know not how to remedy it. To be afraid of sin, is (we are sure) a very commendable quality, and worthy of *encouragement* and *praise*. If any be *superstitiously* timorous, and fear where no fear is, we think them worthy of *pity* and *indulgence*, and that in *Impositions*, *Oaths* and *Subscriptions*, it ought to be remembered, that there are, and ever will be such men in the World; and therefore that such things be never required, but in cases of *great* and *absolute* necessity, in *plain*, *obvious*, and necessary things; and that the forms in which they are proposed, be drawn with great *wariness* and *caution*, and expressed in words of *Common use*, and as free as possible from all *ambiguity* of signification.

S E C T. IV.

1. **W**HEN the Doors of the Church are to us made impassable by the *Turn-Pikes* and *Port-Cullis* that are set before it, we are Excommunicated and delivered over to Satan because we do not come into it. This we must confess is an extraordinary method of proceeding. We find nothing of this nature in the Scripture, or in the practice of the *Primitive Church*. Nothing was required as antecedently necessary to *Church-Communion*, but plain and simple *Christianity*. There were no *Articles*, *Liturgy*, or Book of *Ordination* to be subscribed; There were no *Declarations*, *Oaths*, *Abjurations* to be made to qualify persons for admission thereunto. Assent and Consent to the *Baptismal Covenant*, was then thought sufficient, and would be so still, if we that have less wisdom and understanding, did not presume we have more, than the *Apostles* and *Primitive Christians*.

2. We do very easily acknowledge *Excommunication* a sacred and tremendous Ordinance, *summum futuri judicis prejudicium*, *Tertulian* calls it; and 'tis our Opinion, that when 'tis exercised, it ought to be done with great gravity and seriousness, *magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de Dei conspectu*; and upon very weighty and important reasons. To do it with an insincere trifling spirit, and for *impertinene* and *invaluable* causes and pretences (as is the custom of these days) is to *prophane* it, and make it *cheap* and *contemptible*; and peradventure it may be a greater *Blasphemy* than some men are well aware of or duly consider.

3. In the *Scripture* we find some persons put under this *divine Censure*, but it was for great and obvious transgressions of the *divine Commandments*; St. Paul judged the incestuous *Corinthian* to be delivered unto *Satan*; and he himself did so by *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*: But the one had married his *Fathers* Wife, and the other had made *Shipwreck* of the *Christian Faith*. - These men were a reproach to the *Christian Name*; and therefore it was their duty to disown and reject them from their *Communion*.

4. In the *Primitive Church* we do also find men put under the Sentence of *Excommunication*; but it was usually for denying the Faith, and sacrificing to Idols in Times of Persecution, or for delivering up the *Books* of the holy *Scriptures* into the hands of their Enemies; or for some other gross and scandalous Crimes. We do not find that they imposed *useless, unnecessary, uncertain, and controverted Doctrines* as terms and conditions of *Church-Communion*, and then *Excommunicated* such as could not consent unto them. This was a Practice unknown in the *purest Ages* of the Church.

5. *Victor* Bishop of *Rome* was the first Undertaker in this kind: (besides those that we read of, *Act. 15.*) he would have imposed the *Roman Custom* of observing *Easter* upon the *Asiatick Churches*; and because they refused it, he at least threatened them with *Excommunication*; for *Valesius* thinks he did not actually do it; and 'tis possible that the Letters of *Irenaeus* and others, might prevent the execution of his angry purposes and determinations.

6. We are sorry to see the present *Modes* and *ways* of proceeding in use among us. *Humane Appointments* and *Constitutions* are imposed upon us; things unnecessary and doubtful are required of us, and because we refuse them, we are given up to the Devil; and truly our *Case* were sad, did we not hope for more favour from God, than we do receive or expect from men. For we must stand before another *Tribunal*, and have some hope to be acquitted there, though we be condemned here. *Multa etenim facta qua hominibus improbanda viderentur, testimonio tuo domino approbata sunt. Aug. in confessionibus.*

SECT. V.

THE Penal *Laws* are executed upon us with great *rage* and *indignation*, and there are scarcely any *executions* that are thought sufficiently severe. Should we enumerate our *sufferings*, the History of them would swell into sundry *Volumes*, which is not the *design* of this Discourse. We intend no full *accurate* description of our *calamities*.

2. We are not ignorant, that those that *prosecute* us, think themselves sufficiently *justified* in all that they do against us by the Authority of the *Laws*; we are of another opinion, and so (we make no doubt) will they be *another day*. Those that persecuted the *Christians* in the *Primitive Times*, did it by the authority of the *Laws*, and so did they in *Germany* in the Reign of *Charles* the Fifth; in the Low Countries in the time of Duke *Alva's* Government; and in *England* in the Reign of Queen *Mary*; and so they do now in *France* under the Rule of *Lewis* the 14th.

3. There are few *Protestants* but will condemn those *persecutions*, though they were directed by the *Laws*; and we think it no easie matter to justify the *prosecutions* that are made against us, although those that afflict us, have the *Laws* to plead on their behalf. We think the *Laws* are no better than their *Authors*; and we are sure they were *men* subject to like *passions* with other *Mortals*, and never gave any evidence of *infallible* direction, or *inspiration* in the *contrivance* or making of them.

4. No *Laws* can justify *prosecutions* or *Prosecutors*, but such as are just. Where they are unjust, those that suffer by them are the *innocent* persons, and those that prosecute them are the *Offenders*. 'Tis against the *Law* in *Spain* and *Italy* to read the *Bible* in the Language of those *Countries*; but those that persecute such as transgress that *Law*, are *transgressors*; and those that are outraged and tormented by them, are therein *innocent*, and probably very good *Christians*. 'Twas against the *Law* to make any *Petition* to *God* or *man* for the space of *thirty days*, unless to *Darius* the King. Nevertheless, we esteem *Daniel* that transgressed the *Law*, as a much better man than any of them that prosecuted him for the breach of it.

5. The *Laws* require of us the practice of things *unnecessary* to subscribe to things *doubtful*, and not at all *essential* to the *Christian Religion*, to swear to *Propositions doubtful*, if not denied by men of *great learning* and *sobriety*. The refusal of these things is *penal*, some of us are thereby disabled publickly to *preach the Gospel*, and others to *attend it*; and if we *preach or hear, or worship God in private* in the *Communion of more than five*, besides the *Family* in which such *worship* is performed, we are exposed to punishments more than *many*, and those none of the *smallest or gentlest* kinds.

6. If the imposing things of *this nature*, to be *sworn, subscribed and declared*, and the punishing men for the *refusal* of them, and *worshipping God by other Laws and Methods* than those prescribed by the *English Liturgy*, be just in themselves, or will justify our *Persecutors*, we despair of understanding any thing of the *natures of good and evil*. But of the *unreasonableness*, and *injustice* of impositions (and the *impossibility* of uniting the Church by them, See a little Book called the *Samaritane*.

S E C T. VI.

THough the *Penalties* imposed on us by the *Laws*, be severe enough, yet did we suffer no more than the *Law* directs, we should not have *so much*, nor *so many reasons* to complain, but alas, the *Laws* are not *keen enough* to wound us, nor *sharp enough* to draw *blood* to the satisfaction of our *enemies*, the *Informers*, who are *insatiable* in their *malice*, their *hatred* and their *rage*. The little *fingers* of our *Prosecutors* are *heavier* than the *Loins of the Law*; if the one *chastise* us with *Rods*, the other does *correct* us with *Scorpions*.

2. The old *musty Statutes*, that were made and intended to the prejudice of the *Papists*, tho seldom or never *executed* upon them, are *turned* by these *Informers* against us with *severity and height of Indignation*, and we think we may safely say, that more *true Protestants* have been *worried, ruined and undone* by them in the space of half one year, than *Papists* in neer an hundred. Those *Rods* that were made to *scourge* them are dipped in *Brine*, and laid on our backs with *strokes*, till the *flesh, blood and bones* appear. They escape the *Curse* of the *Statutes*, but we die *without mercy*, and can find no *remedy* from their *vengeance*. *Dat veniam Corvis, vexat censura columbas.*

3. To which we will add, The *Laws* sometimes seem to be put upon Tilters, and extended to such *uses* and *significations*, as is likely never entered into the *minds* of those that made them. Any *Commentary* is sound and good, though it perverts the *Text*, provided it may serve the turn of our Enemies the *Informers*. And there is, almost, no *Statute*, that may not by a dextrous *exposition*, become an *instrument* of our ruine, as we find by very *dismal* experience, almost every day. These Men are marvelously *ingenious* to destroy us; and 'tis a strange *Law* indeed in which they can find nothing to *promote* it.

4. We have heard, or read, that in the dayes of our *Fathers*, it was thought a good *wholesom* rule, that *penal Laws* were to be construed in the most *favourable* sense, that the words were capable of bearing; but the men of *this age*, our *Prosecutors*, are of other persuasions, that old worn eaten *maxime* is now of no *value* or *reputation*, at least in such *cases* where we are concerned. The *severest* sense that can be put upon them, is the only rule and *measure* of interpretation, yea, senses *more severe* then can with any *reason* be affixed unto them, are esteemed very *laudable* Expositions. All senses are good with them that will do us *hurt*, and all *coments* lawful, that may be serviceable to our *calamity* and *affliction*.

SECT. VII.

1. WE have been in some places punished for *fauls* that we never committed, and prosecuted for our presence at *Conventicles* where we never were. This we think is hard *measure*, but 'tis no other than what we have had *experience* of.

2. Those men upon whose *Evidence* and *Oaths*, some of us have been convicted, are persons *viler* than the *Earth*, their *Fathers* we would have scorned to have set among the *Dogs* of our *Flocks*. They are the *dregs* of the *People*, and the *abhorrence* of all that know or have any *conversation* with them. Their *Debaucheries* have beggared and *impoverished* them to that degree, that they take up this trade. Their *Words* and their *Oaths* will not be taken, among their *Neighbours*, for a *Groat*.

3. We have heard or read, that according to our *Laws*, those that receive *Evidence* against any *subject* of the Realm, ought to consider the *quality* and *credibility* of him, or them that give it, and there *seems* to be a great deal of *reason* for it, for otherwise our *Estates*, our *Reputation*, and our *Lives*, are all at the mercy and in the disposal of all such *Varlets*, as have so much *need*, and so little *conscience*, as to make merchandize of them. How well this good and charitable rule hath been observed in those *testimonies* that have been taken against us, we are not willing to say.

4. It is readily granted that those *Gentlemen*, to whom these *Miscreants* offer their *Oaths* and *Depositions*, cannot refuse them, because they *themselves* become *criminal*, and liable to prosecutions at Law thereby. But we do humbly conceive, that when we appeal to the *Sessions*, which is a Court of *Judicature*, where they either are our *Judges*, our *Jury*, or both; the quality of the *Witnesses* and *Deponents*, ought to be considered, especially when we bring *evidence* sufficient to disable all their *attestations*.

S E C T. VIII.

1. **W**E are ruined in our *Estates* and *Fortunes*; our Houses are broken up, the *Goods* and *Furniture* whereof are violently taken from us, and whatever we have any *propriety* in, is taken out of our *possessions*. Those that *spoil* us shew us no *mercy*, they are *incororable* to all our *Intreaties* and *Complaints*. If we tell them that by the *seizure* and *sale* of our *Goods*, our *Persons* and *Families* are beggered, and brought to a morsel of Bread, 'tis to as good *purpose*, as if we discoursed to the same sense to the *Wolves* of the *Deserts*. What evidence they do give to others that they are *men*, we do not know, but we are able to infer it, from no other *argument* but their shape.

2. All the *Applications* that we make to them for *mercy* or *favour*, are rejected with insolent *pride* and *scorn*; the most modest and humble *Petitions* and *Supplications*, are received with *rage* and *indignation*. 'Tis a crime to beg any *abatement* or *remissions* of the utmost *severities* of the *Laws*; and some that have been *uneasie* and complained of the *burden* of them, we are inclined to think, will complain no more, having no mind to be lashed whilst they are raw.

3. The usual answer that is made to all the *Addresses*, that we make unto them, is this, *You are a company of factious Fanatiques, and you must bear the penalties of the Statutes*; and we have born them so long

long, some of us, that we can bear them *no more*. For how they will *destrain* upon those that have no *Goods*, we cannot easily understand, nor how the *mults* will be paid by insolent *persons*, we are not able to *divine*.

4. We take no *pleasure* in these *Narrations*, and we hope we may be *believed*, when we say, that we are *sorry* that we have any *occasion* for them; but truth is truth, losers will talk. Those that are pinched will go near to complain. We are no *Stoicks*, we have not put off the *Passions* and *Affections* of *Humane Nature*, nor are we like to do, tho, perhaps, we may have *reason* to wish it a thing *possible*.

S E C T. IX.

1. **W**E are imprisoned and laid in *Goals* among *Rogues*. We are made (at least) *neighbours* to those that are the lees of the people. Our restraint is a *Calamity*, but the Neighborhood of these *Varlets*, make it much more heavy and *insupportable*. Their *swearing* and *blasphemy*, their *Midnight Revels* and *Debaucheries* (which we cannot cease to hear) are a perpetual *offence* unto us; and we think it a cruelty much like that of *chaining the Living* to the *Dead*.

2. 'Tis true sometimes we have *good company* more than we do desire, for we are thrown by *heads* into Prisons and Places of Restraint. But though the presence of our *Friends* be pleasant, and their *Conversation* lovely, and we could heartily rejoyce in it elsewhere; 'tis no solace to us to have them *Companions* in our Griefs, or *Cojartners* in our Calamities, and we should *rejoyce* in their *liberty* though we our selves were bound.

3. If we survive our Imprisonment, (which we do not alwaies do) and return again to our *own houses*, we bring along with us the *foundation* of those *Diseases*, that in some space and tract of time do bring us to our *Graves*. The closeness of our *Lodgings*, the thickness, impurity, and corruption of the Air, the want of due *exercise* to move and agitate the *humors* of our Bodies, and preserve them from *stagnation*, overthrows our very *Crafs* and Constitution, and thence proceeds those *Diseases*, that no art can cure or remove.

4. Suppose that by *care* and *art* our Lives be a little prolonged, we are a burthen to our *selves*, and all that are about us. And whereas other men die but *once*, we die a *thousand times*, and as often stab to the heart all that have any kindness, or *passion* for us.

S E C T. X.

1. **W**E are represented as *Enemies* to the Government, and traduced as *illoyal* to our Prince. 'Tis suggested that we have an averſation for *Monarchy*, and that we have a mighty fondneſs for a *Democratical Government*. Whether thoſe that firſt reported theſe things concerning us, did *believe* them we cannot tell, but we are ſure that *many* others do. We find that precept of *Machianil* verified in our ſelves; *Calumniare audacter, ſaltem aliquid adhibebit*. Calumniate boldly, ſomething at leaſt will ſtrike. The moſt pücid *Lies* will find ſome perſons that will *believe* them; and the moſt improbable *ſalshoods* will receive entertainment with *eaſe* and *credulous* minds.

2. By this means we are made *odious* to ſome perſons, and *ſuſpected* of many others; ſome *hate* us implacably, others grow *jealous*, and entertain hard *thoughts* of us. Were the *characters* they give uſtrüe and deſerved, we ſhould have no *reaſon* to *complain*, but for as much as we know our ſelves *innocent*, it cannot but be matter of *reſentment* to us, to be ſo villanouſly and *ſpitefully* bely'd and defamed.

3. 'Tis true, there be *very many* that have other *apprehenſions* of us, they are better *acquainted* with our *Judgments* and *Lives*, than to believe ſuch odious *characters* and *deſcriptions*, and we have reaſon to *bleſs* God for it, for if all (I mean all *Church-of-England-men*) believed them, we muſt certainly be *outrage* d in the ſtreets, and *knocked* on the head in the *High-ways* and *Villages*; and all that killed us, would think they deſerved a *compensation* for ridding the Nation of ſuch *pernicious* vermin.

4. To theſe *infamous lies* and *hellish inſinuations*, we muſt impute the withdrawing of his *Majeſties* favour from us, for although we do believe that he knows little of thoſe *ſeverities* that are uſed and exerciſed toward us, yet we cannot but *think*, that he hath a little looſned the *rein*, by which he reſtrained his *Magiſtrates* and *Officers* from proſecuting and afflicting us. We complain not of our *Sovereign*, we have had much *experience* of his clemency. He muſt ſee by other mens *Eyes*, and hear by other mens *Ears*, and if the ſame *impious ſlanders* be reported to him, that are to many of his *ſubjects* concerning us, (of which there is no doubt) we cannot much *wonder* at our preſent *ſufferings*; for ſuppoſing them true, they were no more than we had *abundantly* deſerved.

CHAP. II.

The Dissenters Expostulations.

SECT. I.

1. **A**ND what now are our Faults and Crimes, or of what number and nature are our Transactions? What is it we have done, to make us become the Objects of all that rage and wrath, that is used, and spent against us? Are we the vilest of Mortals? Are we the most profligate of Mankind? Are we the only part of the Nation, that deserve the publick Vengeance? Why are we hunted and prosecuted like Beasts of Prey, and as if we were a common Nuisance to the Countrey, and Land of our Nativity or Birth.

2. We are treated as the Off-scouring of the Earth, the filth of the World, and Refuse of the People. There is no Contempt, no Scorn, no Reproach, no Penalties, no Violence, no Injury, no Oppression, thought too much to be imposed and laid upon us. But how is it proved that we have deserved it? What evidence is there of those Enormities, that may justify these extraordinary Methods of proceeding against us. The Christians complained of old, that they were punished and condemned for the sake of the Christian name, not for the sake of any Crimes that were proved against them, *Hominis Prælium est*. See Tertull. in *Apolget.* and *Athenagoras in legat. pro Christianis*.

3. Something of this sort is happened to us in the present Age. To be a Dissenter is Crime enough to expose a man to the rage of Persecutors. *Illud solum expectatur, quod odio publico necessarium est, confessio nominis, non examinatio criminis*. Dissent, to the present Establishment, is æquipollent to all the Publican and Harlot Sins in the World, and we may be guilty of them (we are sorry to speak it) at far easier and cheaper rates. Fornication, Adultery, Scandal, Oppression, Lying, Perjury, Scorn of all Religion, and Blasphemy, are Peccadillo's in comparison of Nonconformity. The former are easily expiated, but nothing will allow for the latter but our ruine.

4. The *Christians* of the first Ages did not deny that they were accused of sundry *monstrous Crimes*, nor do we deny that we are made sufficiently vile by charge and imputation, but nothing was proved against them. Nor are those *infamous Stories* reported concerning us, capable of any proof or demonstration, for Lies can never become truth, nor falsehoods obtain the nature of undoubted Verities, and 'tis truth alone that is proveable by argument and convictive evidence. 'Tis true we do confess, that Men of *Parts* and *Wit* will very finely dress a Falsehood, and persons of an *impudent Front* and *prostituted Conscience* will affirm the most *prodigious* Lies and Slanders; but when all is done, the nature of things and Facts is the same, and utterly invariable.

SECT. 2.

1. Is it a Sin of so monstrous a nature, that nothing can expiate it but our destruction to refuse to subscribe Propositions of doubtful and uncertain nature? If they be doubtful, why are we obliged to assert their truth? If they be uncertain, why must we aver them past all Controversy and Dispute? If they be neither doubtful, nor uncertain, why is it that *Christians* are not agreed concerning them? Why is the learned World so much divided about them? Would they everlastingly contend, about things evident and apparent? Would they perpetuate a Controversy about things as plain as the Light, and obvious as the mid-day Sun?

2. Is it a Crime that deserves all this Cruelty, and all those Barbarities that are executed upon us, that we refuse our Subscription to things of impertinent and unnecessary nature? Are all those Propositions and other things to which our Subscription and Consent, and many others, is required necessary, and of the essence of the Religion of *Christ Jesus*? May not a man be a good Christian, though he should not understand, nor believe any thing of them? If they be necessary, why are they not comprehended in the *Baptismal Covenant*, or in the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and the ten Commandments? These were anciently thought to contain all the necessary Doctrines of Christian Faith and Practice, and we are of Opinion they do so still. The *essential* and necessary parts of Religion are invariable, they are the same *now* that they were in the days of the *Apostles* and antient Churches.

3. Is it so heinous a Transgression to refuse the practice of things of no use, and to no edification, that no compensation can be made for it, but what will undoe us? We do not know of what use those Ceremonies

monies are, that have been, and still are in use in this *Church*, nor who is edified by them. We are sure those that are the greatest *Zealots* for them, do not appear to be much edified by the Appointments and Institutions of God, and 'twere strange if they should be advantaged by those of Man, who are little or nothing believed by those of God. And if those that love and admire them, make no *profitable* use of them, What may be hoped from those that love them not ?

4. Are not the Laws of God sufficient for our Observation ? And may not Christians go safe to Heaven, under the direction, and in the Obedience of his Commandments ? Are God's Laws sufficient for their end, or are they not ? If they be sufficient, What need is there of any additions to them ? If they be not sufficient, Why do we assert and prove it against the *Papists* ?

5. Since *Christ Jesus* hath freed us from the *Yoke*, that God himself had imposed upon the *Jewish Church*, we know no Obligation lying upon us, to receive a *Yoke* that shall be imposed upon us by Man. We refuse Obedience to none of the Laws of God, nor to no Laws of Men, that are necessary for the observance of the Divine Appointments and Institutions, such as are the determination of time and place, and sundry others, but these Laws that are the effects of *pure will*, and of no use nor profit, but occasions of Strife and Contention, we do profess to all the World, we know not the Obligation of them.

6. Must we be Ruined, Banished, or Hanged, for no other reason, but because we are loath to be damned ? St. Paul saith, that *Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, and he that doubteth is damned if he eat*. We have considered the *impositions* that are laid upon our Judgments and Practices, we have spent much time in the *meditation* of them, and would very willingly have submitted to them, if we could have done it with a satisfied and assured Mind. But upon the most *serious deliberation* which we have made upon them, we find an *everlasting* reitency of Judgment and Conscience against them. This is our Case, and this is our Fault, and must we abjure the Land, or swing in a Rope at home, for the sake of it ? This in our *Apprehension* is somewhat severe, but the choice is not difficult, we had far rather be Banished our Countrey then that out of Heaven, 'tis more eligible to climb a Gallows, or ascend a Gibbet, then descend the nethermost Hell. But whether it be justifiable to impose such a choice upon us, is worthy the consideration of those that are concerned therein.

SECT. 3.

1. Is it a greater Sin to Worship God by other rules, than those prescribed by our Laws, then it is to live as without *God in the World*, and never perform any *publick Worship* to him at all? How many thousands are there in the Towns, Cities, and Villages, of this Nation, that never attend the house of God, that never *Sanctifie his Sabbaths*, or *Venerate his Sanctuaries*? And what are the Punishments that they do *sustain* thereby? Are they *prosecuted at Law*? Are their Goods seized? Their Persons Imprisoned, and their Families beggered in revenge thereof?

2. We hear of no Complaints or Lamentations, made by these kind of People, which surely they would do, if they had any occasion or foundation for them. They are not Men of such tame and passive Spirits, as to endure scourging without any Groans or Exclamations; for though they regard not God nor his Worship, they love their *Liberty* and their *Estates*, and would not part with them without loud significations of their Reluctancy against it. Since they cry not out of Violence and Oppression, we may be sure they are at rest.

3. May Men be *Atheists*, *Infidels*, or *Heathens*, with Impunity? May they defie God and all the Laws and Methods of his Worship with all the security they can desire or wish? And must the *Dissenters* be worried like *Bears*, and torn with *Dogs* because they fear God and call upon his name? 'Tis true, they do not do it altogether according to the direction of our Laws. But do they not do it according to the Laws of God? Did *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* use any more Ceremony or Liturgy in Preaching, Praying, and Administ'ring the Sacrament then they do? And why may not that suffice? Is it a pardonable Crime to be a *Heathen*, and is it a fault worthy of the severest Punishment to Worship God and his Christ after the manner and example of the Apostles? Some Men seem to be of that Opinion, but we think it were not amiss to renounce it, for sure we are, that the Devil is the Author of it.

4. We are not ignorant of what is said, by the Masters and Fautors of Impositions, on the behalf, and for the defence of them. 'Tis said, that without them no Peace nor Order can ever be preserved in the Church of God. But we are of another mind. In our Judgment, nothing ought to be imposed, but a few, plain, necessary things, and those are enough for the *maintenance* of Peace, and that to impose a multitude of things, *needless*, *obscure*, *controverted*, and *uncertain* is the high and

and certain way to endless *Factions* and *Divisions*, and that as much peace as the Church of God is capable of in this imperfect State, may be more safely and advantageously obtain'd without them; But for this we must again refer the Reader, to the Book call'd the *Samaritan*.

S E C T. 4.

1. Have we ever refused to contribute to the *maintenance* of the Government with our Lives and Fortunes? Have not our *Purses* been as open, and our *Hands* as ready to defend his *Majesties* Honor and Greatness as any other of his Subjects? Did we ever betray any Trust that was committed to us? Have we turned our Backs in the day of Battle? Have we not been as *prodigal* of our Blood, and given as good Proofs of our *Courage* and *Valour* as any others that have been engaged with us in the same hazards and dangers? When, and where did we do any thing unworthy of *English* men, or good Subjects? Where are our *Accusers*? Let them stand forth and convince us (if they are able) of any *Disloyalty*, or neglect of Duty, towards the Support of the just Grandeur of our Prince.

2. Let them not object to us the *Rebellion* and *Miscarriages* of the last Age: We neither promoted nor approved them. Many of us were not then born; others were *children*; others opposed what was then done; and some that were too much guilty in the *Tragedies* of those times, have since *repented it in Dust and Ashes*. As we do not justify, so we will not account for other mens Sins. We only plead our *own Cause*, and assert our own Integrity and Uprightness. We hope we shall not be punished for the *Iniquities of our Fathers*, nor reckoned Enemies to the State, because *some of them* were so.

3. If we must be reputed ill Subjects, because some men will suspect us, and esteemed *Traytors*, because *poisonous Tongues* will calumniate and *reproach* us, our Case is pitiable; but without *Remedy*. For there is no defence against *Slander*; Mens Lusts, and spiteful passions are not under our Government or *Restraint*; what they suggest will be spoken, though never so false and infamous, and we cannot prevent it. The most unblemished *Loyalty* is no Protection against a *malicious malignant* Mind; a Tongue set on *Fire of Hell*, will blast the fairest and most unspotted *Reputation*.

4. We have a *Province* that is not easily managed to the *satisfaction* of these *Reviewers*: If we refuse the *Oaths*, *Subscriptions* and *Declarations* that are required of us as *Testimonies* and *Securities* of our Fidelity, we are reported and said to reject them, because they are inconsistent with our Purposes and Principles of Rebellion. If we accept and submit to them in the same Sence that all sober and considering Church of England men do, 'tis said that we do it with design to get *Offices* and *Preferments* in Church and State, that we may be the more capable of subverting and *destroying* both one and the other. This is the *Language* of multitudes of Books and Pamphlets which the Press voids every day.

5. What shall we do to please these Men? We are willing to give them all *reasonable* Content; but if neither *assent* nor *dissent* to their *Impositions*; if neither *obedience*, nor *disobedience* to their *Injunctions*, will humor or please them, we must desire them to inform us what will: For we are not very well able to inform our selves.

6. And yet after some Consideration, we think we may have found what may

E

please

please and put them in good humour : Would we hang, drown, or cut our own Throats, and leave them Heirs to our Estates and Fortunes, 'tis not improbable but that it might be an *Adventure* much to their Acceptation : But if nothing else will commend us to their Favor, we must beg their Pardon, we shall not purchase it at their Price. We have no mind to be damned, to give them *Satisfaction* : If they will buy it at that Rate, we must bear it ; but they must excuse us, we will have no hand or part with them therein : If we must die to gratify them, they must be our *Executioners*.

S E C T. 5.

1. But what indeed is the Ground of Provocation ? Are we useless, unprofitable, or burthensom *Members* of the Nation ? Do we live without Labour, or do we eat of the *Sweat* of other mens Brows ? Are we not equally industrious with any other sort of men ? Do we not contribute to the *enriching* of our Country as much as other of his *Majesties* Subjects ? We bear our part in that *Trade*, and to'l in those Arts and Mysteries, by which Supplies are made to the *Pleasures*, *Necessities*, and *Magnificence* of all Orders and Degrees of men.

2. Do not we assist to the Advancement of the Customs and Revenues of the Crown ? All men that know any thing of those matters, do acknowledge, that of late years they have received very great *Emoluments*, and are swollen beyond the *proportion* of former Ages ; and have we had no part, nor share therein ? Do not we partake in that Trade and Merchandise by which they are encreased and advanced ?

3. No man of *Sence* can deny us a part in those Advantages, that have been made to the *Revenue*, and riches of our *Sovereign*. We have surely done something, towards the Augmentation of them, and those that deny it are such, as have neither *Brains*, nor Front. They are both ignorant, and themselves Impostors. And 'tis our Opinion, that those that counsel and advise our Ruine, will not be able to *countervail* the *King's Damage*.

4. We mention not these things out of Vanity or Ostentation ; but that it may appear, that we are not utterly *useless* and of no signification in the world. Our *Enemies* report us not only *unprofitable*, but noxious and hurtful to the *Commonwealth*. The *Paragraphs* of this Section are a sufficient *Confutation* of the former of these *Fables*, and the whole Body of this *Discourse* will confute the latter to all impartial and *unprejudiced* Men.

S E C T. 6.

1. Are we only a *handful* of Men that may all safely be destroyed ? Will the Nation be of *equal Strength* when we are sacrificed to the Rage and Lust of those that hate us ? Hath his Majesty too many Subjects ; and will he be as great and *pissant* without, as with the Assistance of our *Numbers* ? What our Numbers are, we do not pretend to know ; but some there are scattered to and fro in most of the Towns, Cities, and Villages of the Nation, and we think more, then can with security be ruined and destroyed.

2. 'Tis not impossible, but that His Majesty may have use for all his Subjects, we're they much more *numerus* then they are. He is Neighbour to an *Aspiring Prince*, that may, in due time, give him *disturbance*, and if (as most certain it is) the multitude of People be the first Riches of any Nation, especially of such

as are sober, frugal, Industrious and naturally inclin'd to *Trade* and *Manufactories* (Epithets and Qualifications we think as justly belonging to *us* at least as any of our fellow Subjects.) We are not Eagle-ey'd enough to penetrate into their Politicks that contrive our Ruine; Nor can we foresee what Advantage would accrue to the King or Kingdom either in wealth or strength if at least a *Million* of it's most *laborious Inhabitants* should be forc'd either to fly into foreign parts; or be rendred by Jailing and other severe Prosecutions unuseful at home.

S E C T. 7.

And what will you do with your *Estates* when we are ruined and undone? Have you too many *Tenants* to occupy and employ your *Lands*? Where are those *Supernumeraries*? How may we find their *Residence* and *Habitations*? If they be so *numerous*, how comes it to pass that so many *Estates* lie almost waste, and so many *Houses* without any *Inhabitants*? How is it that *Farms* go a begging, and that those that own them are glad to be rid of them almost upon any Terms in the World?

2. Are not the *Rents* and *Values* of your *Lands* very much *diminished* and abated? Are they not sunk twenty, thirty, and forty in the Hundred; and can you tell *when* and *where* they will stand? Is our *Poverty* and *Ruine* a likely way of advancing them to their former *Standard*? We know not how you take your *measures*, nor by what *Rules* you make your *Computations*; but we are of the mind, that our *Diminution* will not be your *Encrease*; and that if we be brought to the *Dung-hill*, your *Estates* and *Honours* will receive no *Advancement* thereby.

3. If the Value of your *Lands* decay, how will you support your *usual State* and *Grandeur*? How will you *educate*, provide for, *dispose* of your Children, according to their *Birth* and *Spirit*? Have you not found it a work of some Care and *Providence* even then, when your *Estates* were at the highest *rate* and *value*? If it were difficult then, will it not be now *impossible*? Or can you do that with two thousand pounds *per annum*, that you could not formerly do with *three*: will nine pence go farther than a *Noble*?

4. Are you content to be poor, so we be ruin'd; and to abate of your *greatness*, so we may be laid on the *Dung-hill*? Can you deny your selves some *Pleasures* and *Satisfactions*, provided we may be *miserable* and *afflicted*? Can you endure some *abatement* if we be trod upon as the *Mire* in the *Streets*? This is a piece of Self-Denial, which we did not expect, and we doubt whether you would do so much for the *Sake of God*, and all the *Laws* of his *Gospel*.

S E C T. 8.

1. In the next place, What will you do with us when we are beggared, ruined, and undone? We have so much *Charity* as to hope, you intend not to observe any *Sanguine Methods* in disposing of us. Though those that *Persecute* us be cruel enough, and we find it by sensible and woful experience, yet we cannot think that they intend to cut our *Throats*, or by short and *summary Proceedings* send us to our *Graves*. We must confess, we have known some that have said, that they could very willingly sheath their *Swords* in our *Bowels*, and bath their hands in our *Blood*: But we hope there are not many of this *Savage* and *Brutish* humor.

2. Most *Towns* complain already of the *number* and *burthen* of their *Poor*,

and think the charge *insupportable*. How then will it be born, when we are added to their number? Must we Dye, and starve of *Hunger and Cold*? Must we *faint and swoon* in the High-ways and Streets, and Villages? These are no Stories in *Arras*, these are no Fictions or Imageries of Fancy. If the Laws be prosecuted to the utmost, hither it will come at last.

3. But perhaps we may have reckoned without our *Hist*, and made those *Suppositions* that will not be granted us. It may be we may not be *permitted* either to *live or starve* at home. What then shall be done with us? Shall we be sold for *Slaves*, and sent to toil with *Negro's* in the *Western Islands*? Are we a sort of *Vermin* fit only for their *Employment and Conversation*? We have read, we do confess, of Persons much better then our selves, that have been *condemned to the Mines*, and others to the *Galleys*; but those that passed those *Sentences and Judgments* upon them, were either *Heathens or Infidels*. And will *Englissh Men and Protestants* write after such *Coppies*, and imitate such *Examples*?

4. And could your Eyes behold, or your Hearts endure so dismal an *undertaking*? Could you see us *shipped*, and sent by *thousands* to the *American-Indies*? Have you no Bowels, no *Pity*, nor no *Compassions*, for those that are of your own *nature*, and of the same *Religion*? Or could you prohibit, repress, or restrain them in so *lamentable* a case? What! Have you Hearts of *Marble*, and Entrails of *Brass*? Have you put off *Man*, and put on *Beast*? Have you only the Shape and Figure of Men, with the nature of *Tygres, Bears and Lyons*.

S E C T. 9.

1. After this, What account then will you be able to give to God, of the *Secrets* that you exercise towards us? We hope you believe a *Supream Being*, and a *Day of Judgment*, and that all Men must appear there, and give account of the deeds done in the *Body*? And do you not know that *Christ Jesus* is to be your *Judge*, and that he esteems all the Injuries and Wrongs that are done unto his Servants and *Disciples*, as done unto himself? And are you sure that those that you *Persecute* are none of them? Are you sure they are not *Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bone*? Do you not know that God is a *Consuming Fire*, and that tis a *fearful thing to fall into his hand*? These are serious Questions, and should be seriously considered, and not scorned and turned into *Ridicule*; for if these Men that you thus *Prosecute* with so much Rage and Wrath, should prove the *Servants of the Living God*, (as we do not doubt but that they will) *Certamente no queriamos estar so Pelleio vstro*, we should be very loath to be under your Skin, as the *Spanish Proverb* expresses it.

2. We are not ignorant of what is pleaded in your *defence*, and for your justification. 'Tis said, that we are *Hereticks, Schismaticks, Men of Sedition*, Subverters of all *Peace and Order*, and many other things of like importance are charged upon us. And were not *Christ* and his *Apostles* accused of the same *Crimes*? Was not *Christ* said to subvert the *Mosaical Institution*, which he denied, by saying, he came not to *destroy the Law but to fulfil it*? Was not *Paul* said to be a *Turbulent Fellow*, and a mover of *Sedition*? Were not he and others of the *Apostles and Preachers of the Gospel*, said to have turned the *World upside down*? Were not all *Christians* accounted *Seditaries*, and *Schismaticks*, by the *Scribes and Pharisees*, and other of the People of the *Jews*? This *Self*, say they, is every where *spoken against*.

3. Were they not very confident of the truth of their *Opinions* and *Apprehensions*? Did they not think verily that *Christ Jesus* was a Malefactor and ought to dye? Would they have cryed out, *His Blood be upon us; and upon our Children*, if they had believed him *innocent*? Were not those Persons perswaded, that they had right on their side, which *Gnawed their Teeth, stopped their Ears, ran upon St. Stephen, dragged him out of the City, and stoned him with stones till he dyed*? Were not the *Heathens* pretty well assured, in their own Conceits, that they did very commendably and well, when they outraged the *Christians*, and cryed out, *Take away the Ungodly*? Vid. *Euseb. lib. 4. Cap. 14.*

4. And is it not certain that they were deceived and mistaken? Was it not the Son of God, that the *Jews* persecuted, and murdered, as an Enemy to *Moses*, and a Confederate of *Belzebub*? Were they not the *Apostles* of *Christ*, and the Preachers of Peace, which they prosecuted as Disturbers of the Order and Government of the *World*? Were not the *Primitive Christians*, which the *Heathen* Prosecuted as *Atheists*, *Impious*, and *Ungodly*, Persons of pure and unblameable *Conversations*, and most Religious *Worshippers* of the true and only God?

5. And is it not possible, that you may be deceived in your Judgments and Conceptions, concerning us? Are you not Men of like Passions and Prejudices, with those that have preceded you in past *Generations*? May you not have believed many Lies and slanderous Reports against us? And is not your *Enmity* and *Aversion* towards us, raised upon impudent Falshoods, and frontless Fables? Do you know those things to be true, for the sake whereof you hate us?

6. 'Tis true you do know, that we do *Worship* God in a manner something different from that prescribed by our *Laws*, and peradventure this may be all the evil that you know concerning us: 'Twas said of old, *Bonus vir Caius Scius, sed malus tantum quod Christianus*. *Caius Scius* is a good Man, but he is naught, only because he is a Christian. *Tertull. in Apol.* And we think we might pass for honest men, were it not for our *Nonconformity*. And is that a Crime that will justifie all this *Severity*, and authorize all this *Rage* that is used and spent against us? we cannot tell what it may do at *man's Tribunal*, we do very much believe, it will not do at that of God.

S E C T. 10.

1. But alas, to come up closer, what hurt do the Dissenters do indeed to the Church of *England*? May it not subsist and continue in its *Splendor*, tho' we were permitted to serve God after our own manner, in our own *Congregations*? Is it any hurt to a Great Lord, that there are some poor Cottages in the Neighbourhood of his Palace? Must his Stately Seat drop to the Ground, if they be suffered to stand? will the Foundations of that vast Fabrick sink, and the Walls and Roof fall to the Earth, if these remain in the Vicinage thereof? We cannot imagine how the *Conventicles* can do any Injury to the magnificence of our *English Church*.

2. What Injury did the French Church suffer, by permitting *Dissenting Protestants* the Liberty of their own *Worship* and *Congregations*? we think that Church as *illustrious* when it permitted them their Liberty, as now, when it is using all Arts and Methods to deprive them of it. Besides, the Liberty granted to the Protestants, gave it the Reputation of some Kindness and Humanity; whereas their present Proceedings blast its Reputation, and expose it as cruel, barbarous, and perfidious, to all considering and impartial men.

3. And we are of the mind, that Indulgence to *Dissenting Churches*, would be

no diminution to the Glory of the Church of England. Yea, we do believe, that it would make it more *Illustrious*, and give it a fairer *Reputation* than the present *Persecutions* will ever do. *Persecution* sooner or later turns to the *Reproach* and *Infamy* of those that are the *Authors* and *Promoters* of it. Whatever it may be in the *Opinion* of some Men in the present Age, we make no doubt but it will be *odious* in the next. Those that have been conversant in *History*, cannot but observe, that *Persecution* hath always left a *Spot* and a *Stain* upon those that have been *Agents* therein; and such a one as no *Soap*, or *Niter* will ever wash out, or cleanse. Bonner and Gardner will be *infamous* to all Generations.

S E C T. 11.

1. Is it the matter of our Doctrine you take Offence at? Do our Ministers commend false Doctrine to those that hear them? Do they preach *pernicious* Errors? Is there any thing in their *Sermons* and *Discourses* that is of dangerous or mischievous Nature? They are *men* as well as others; and we do not doubt but they are *liable* to *Errors* and *Mistakes* as well as others of Humane Race; but are their Errors of more fatal *Consequence* and dangerous *Quality* than those that are to be found among the *regular* and *conformable* Clergy? If they be so, why is it not *proved* against them; why are they not *convinced* thereof to their *Reproach* and *Shame*?

2. Have they indeed *preached* *Sedition*, or suggested such things as might disturb the *publick Peace*? Have they *spoke* *evil* of *Dignities*, or endeavoured to mutiny the People against them? Have they *persuaded* them to cast off the *Yoke*, and assert their own *Freedom*, to the *Overthrow* of all good *Government* and *Order*, and to the introducing of *Anarchy*, and utter *Confusion*? On the contrary, is there any Book written for *Loyalty*, with more *Conviction*, *Weight* of *Argument*, *Sobriety* of *Spirit*, and *Perspicacity* of *Notion* (though intricate sometimes in the *Style*) than that Book so honestly commended by the Bishop of *Cork*, Intituled *A peaceable Resolution of Conscience, touching our present Impositions*: And is, not the Author of that Book a *Nonconformist*? we speak not of what was done some years ago; but vindicate our own *Innocency*: we defend not the Faults of our *Progenitors*; nor can we cure the *Miscarriages* of the *Past-age*.

3. Have any of our serious Ministers published *Tenents* inconsistent with the *Articles* of our common Creed? Have they denied the God that Made them, the Saviour that Redeemed them, or the Holy-Ghost that Sanctifieth and Reformeth them? In brief, have they subverted, or denied any of the great *Essentials* of *Christianity*?

4. Do they not Preach the same Matters of *Faith*, *Repentance*, and *Obedience*, that are discoursed and persuaded by the *Conformable Ministers*? Do they not with equal seriousness assert the necessity of them? Do they not press *Self-denial*, *Heavenly mindedness*, *Mortification*, *Contempt of the World*, *Love to God and Men*, and all the Duties of *Christians* and *Believers*? And do they not do this with as much *Life* and *Zeal*, with as much *Fervour* and *Affection* as they are able; yea and with such as comes not short of that, of any of their *Conformable Brethren*.

5. If these things be not true, why are we not openly confuted and shamed in the *Faces* of the *World*? If the Doctrine of our Ministers be false, and of malignant nature, why is there no proof made of it, and why are they not made justly infamous thereby? But if it be true and sound, and such as is for the *Eedification* of *Christians* in *Faith* and *Godliness*, why are they and we *Persecuted*, and *Reproached* for it?

C H A P.

CHAP. III.

The Dissenters Supplications.

SECT. I.

IT is time now to come to a few modest Requests ; we do in the first place *humbly* desire that we may be permitted the *Communion* of the Church, upon the *terms* propounded by *Christ Jesus* and his *Apostles*, and exemplified in the *practice* of the *Primitive Churches* and *Christians* : *St. Paul* calls the Church *The House of God* ; and the Author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, speaking of *Christ Jesus*, calls it his *own House*, and 'tis our Opinion that it belongs to *God* and his *Christ* to appoint the *Conditions* and *Qualifications* of Admission ; and we do *humbly conceive* that they have done it, and that the *Stewards* of their *House* have nothing to do to *alter* them.

2. We do not find that *God*, and his *Son*, and the holy *Apostles* inspired and directed by his *Spirit*, ever required any of *those things* in order to Church *Communion* which are demanded of us, and for the *refusal* whereof we are shut out and *excluded* from it, and prosecuted with so much *severity* besides : For ought that we can perceive, their *Conditions of Communion* were only a few, plain, necessary things ; we can observe no numerous *Articles* of dark, unnecessary and uncertain nature, ever proposed to those that became *Converts* to the *Christian Religion* : *Repent and be Baptized*, sayes *St. Peter*, *Act. 2. 38.* *If thou believest thou may'st be Baptized*, sayes *Philip* to the *Eunuch*, *Act. 8. 37.*

3. The altering *Gods terms* of *Communion* hath broken the *Peace* of the *Church*, split it in pieces, and run it into *Factions*, *Parties* and *Divisions* well nigh these *Fourteen hundred years* ; and that blessed Engine that first tore it in pieces, keeps the *Wounds* of it open, and hinders all coalition of the parts of it to this day ; and although the thing be sufficiently apparent, and hath been said and repeated by many great *Divines*, and other very learned men, yet those that are concerned to know it, neither *cannot* or *will not* see it.

4. Nothing will ever heal the *Breaches* of *Christendom*, or make up those *rents* and *divisions* that are therein, but the removal of the *Causes* of them, among which we reckon this the most principal, and

most *mischievous* ; all other means do but exasperate the *feuds* and *animosities* that are among *Christians* and *Churches*, or else destroy all true *Religion*, *Piety*, and *serious Godliness*, (which is the *glory* of *Christian Churches*) under pretence of preserving the *Peace* of them : *Solitudinem faciunt, & pacem vocant* ; saith *Tertull.*

5. The reducing the *terms of Communion* to their primitive *Purity*, *Plainness*, and *Simplicity*, would put an end to almost all the *unnatural Heats*, *Separations* and *divisions* that are in the *Church of England* : This would bring almost all the *Dissenters* into its *Communion*, and for others, *provisions* might be made to their *satisfaction*, upon such terms as will not *prejudice* but honour this *Church*, and give it the reputation of a very *Humane*, *Tender* and *Christian* temper.

6. And why we may not be *Christians*, and enjoy the *Communion* of *Christians* upon the good old terms, we do confess we are somewhat to seek, and we are able to give our selves no other account of it, but that it is not the good pleasure of the Devil and his *Agents and Factors* : We do conceive that God *Almighty* hath made no change in the *Conditions* of admission into his *Family* and *House* ; those that do affirm it, are obliged to prove it, which we think will be a very difficult province. If God himself hath not altered them, we cannot tell who should be so bold to attempt it, unless it be that great enemy of God, and some others that do receive direction from him.

SECT. II.

1. If the terms of *Communion* may not be altered, we pray that there be such a *sense of Savour* put upon them, as may make us capable of consenting to them, and that that sense be declared by *Parliament*, or by the *Judges* of the Land, that so there may remain no scruple concerning it ; this would satisfy the *Fears* and *Jealousies* of our *Consciences* : The opinion of some private persons privately delivered, though they may be great men, and give great reasons for it, will not satisfy us ; we speak it from experience, we have heard and read what hath been said on the behalf of such an *Exposition*, as we could acknowledge and assent unto, but when all is done, our *Judgments* are not at rest in the determination of one or two probable *Doctors* or *Expositors*.

2. We do not desire by any *Exposition* of the imposed *Oaths*, *Subscriptions* and *Declarations* to be discharged from any part of the Du-

ty and *Allegiance* we owe to our King, we desire not to be freed of any obligation that God hath laid upon us; nay, we do *sufficiently understand* that 'tis impossible: No humane *Interpretation* can weaken or dissolve the force of the divine *Laws*; we are willing to give to *Cesar* the things which are *Cesar's*, and we are willing to oblige our selves thereunto; our Judgment concerning the Power of *Princes* and the Duty of *Subjects*, we desire the Reader to receive from Mr. *Baxter* in his Second Plea, *Chap.* 3, 4, and 5. and a Book before named.

3. Nor is it our wish or *Intention* by any *Exposition* to be left at *Liberty* to subvert the Fundamentals of *Christian* Religion, or to revile the *Articles*, *Liturgy* or *Discipline* of the Church; there are many things that we can *endure*, that we cannot *approve*, and may we have the *Liberty* of our own *Judgments*, we can quietly permit to others the *Liberty* of theirs; we will maintain no Controversies about differing *Opinions* in things of no great moment, and such as are of *obscure* and *uncertain* nature and truth; in such things let men think as they list, and we will do so too; we will not break the peace of the Church for the sake of them; but the imposing these things upon our *Faith*, and obliging us to avow them of *equal* truth with the *Word of God*, is, and we think ought to be an *abomination*: We know not *medium* between truth and falsehood, nor doth truth receive *magis* and *minus*, all truth is equally true; what is *not* contrary to the *Word of God* (they are the words in which we are to subscribe to the 39 *Articles*, the *Liturgy* and Book of *Ordination*) is agreeable thereunto; and what is agreeable thereunto, is as true as the Sacred and *inspired* Volumes; which (to speak modestly) is to our apprehension a very bold and daring assertion.

4. Such a favourable *Exposition* (as we have mentioned) of the things imposed and required of us, hath been several times Printed for the use of the *Sheriffs* and *Citizens of London*, as also by the *Learned* and *Judicious* Author of the *Peaceable Resolution* already cited; to which we will add the Author of the *Peaceable Design*, in his answer to Dr. *Stillingsfleet's* Sermon: We think the sense of favour put upon the *impositions* by these *Authors*, or rather *Author* (for we think indeed they came out of the same mint) to be the result of many thoughts, and of much consideration; and might it have publick and authentique approbation, it would heal almost all the *Divisions* and *Separations* that are among us.

SECT. III.

1. If neither of these *requests* may be granted to us, we doe most *humbly* begg that we may be *perswaded* and argued into *Conformity* by Reason and *Discourses* : We are *Men*, and Reason is of our *Essence* and Constitution ; we are willing to be *governed* and directed by it, and we do say, (that though what hath been *said* hitherunto in the *justification* of it, doth not satisfie our *Consciences*, nor take off our *objections* against it) we are much more moved by your arguments than by your *Clubs* : We do plainly perceive that 'tis found *reason* with some little *intermixtures* of kindness and love, that must make us *Profelytes* to the Church of *England*, or nothing.

2. To perswade us to *Conformity* by Prisons and *Confiscations*, is, in our apprehension, something like demonstrating a Proposition in *Euclide*, or *Apologizing* by a *Beetle* and *Wedges*, and we think they will equally produce their effects. When any *Mathe-matician* shall do the one, the *Church of England* may perform the other ; We never find our selves Edified by a *Dungeon*, or Instructed by the *spoiling* of our Goods : Force hath as little power on *Souls*, as a *Chyrurgeons Knife* on the *Understanding* and *Affections* of men ; Remedies must have some *Analogy* with the *Sick*, and their *Diseases* ; Force prevails upon the *Body*, and Reason upon the *Soul*, Du Plessis in his *Memoires*, vol. 1. p. 562.

3. These *barbarous* methods of *Instruction*, instead of bringing us nearer to the Church of *England*, set us at a greater distance from it : *Who can better judge of the inutility of force in the business of Religion, than your Majesty* ; (saith Du Plessis, ubi supra.) You have employed your arms with success against such as they were designed to *ruine*, but have made no other advantage thereby than to learn, that the greatest successes are not successful against the *Consciences* of men. See his Letter to *Henry the Third of France*.

4. 'Tis not impossible but that your *Severities* may bring some of us to your *Churches*, but do you think they will alter our *Judgments*, or reconcile us to your way and method of *Serving God* ? Do you think you have made us *Converts* to your *Liturgy* and *Discipline*, when you have *basted* us into your *Assemblies* and *Congregations* ? If you think so, you are very much *mistaken* ; we have no other, nor no better thoughts of it than we had before.

5. Many

5. Many of us do think it *lawful* to communicate in your *Assemblies* and *Worship*, when we are *permitted* no other nor no better; we can be *contented* with mean *Provisions* and *Lodging* in our *Travails*, and where no better is to be had, but where there is *Liberty* and *Choice*, we do usually *choose the best*, and we hope we are not to be *blamed* for it; we speak not this to *disparage* the *publicke Preaching* and *Worship*, that hath the *approbation* of the *Government* and *Laws*: We do *acknowledge* that there are many *worthy* and *excellent* Persons that serve at the *publick Altars*, and if *all* or *most* were so, we should have much less *reason* and *necessity* of going *elsewhere*; but alas it is not so, and they must be very *ignorant* or very *partial* that can deny it.

6. Besides, in our Opinion, that is *best* that does us *most good*, and is most *accommodate* to our *Capacities*, and we find a *plain Discourse* makes deeper *Impressions* upon our *Hearts*, and moves and *enlivens* our *Passions* and *Affections*, much more than a *learned* and *elaborate Oration*: Plain *Country* People like the *mean Provisions* of their own *Cottages* better than the more *costly Accommodations* of *Palaces* and *Courts*; 'Tis not what is best in it *self*, but what is best for us, that we *love* and *choose*.

7. And as many, yea, far the *most* of us come to your *Congregations* with the *liking* and *approbation* of our *Judgments* and *Consciences*, so 'tis very possible that some may be *affrighted* thither by *Warrants*, *Constables* and *Informers*, something to the *regret*, *trouble* and *offence* of them; but surely *these* are no more in *love* with your *Communion*, than the *Protestants* in *France* are in *love* with that *Worship* to which they are forced with *Pitch-forks*, and dragged with *Ropes*: But peradventure so we come to your *Churches*, 'tis indifferent to you whether it be *with* or *against* our *Judgments*, whether it be out of *Love* or out of *Fear*, out of *Reason* or out of *Interest*, to serve *God* or escape the *Gallows*.

8. This was not the ancient *Method* of *Converting* and bringing men into the *Christian Communion*, we do not find it either *prescribed* or *practised* by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, or any of the *Primitive Bishops*: We are afraid this *new Invention* is something *diabolical*; if you can *Profelyte* us by *Gods* *wayes* and means of *Conversion*, do it with all our *hearts*; but *Sauhanical* endeavours will not encrease your *Communion*, nor add to the numbers of your *Churches*, unless you will reckon them your *Members* and *Brethren*, that are no otherwise such, than *Christian Slaves* are the *Subjects* of the *Great Turk*, or *King of Morotco*: *Christ Jesus* would receive none but *willing Servants* into his *Family*, but those that pretend

tend to be his *Officers* and *Stewards*, receive, yea, force in the *unwilling*, so they do in *France*, and so they do *somewhere* else, or we are *shrewdly* mistaken.

SECT. IV.

1. We do further *intreat*, that such of us as cannot by *reason* and *argument* be brought into your *Communion*, may have the liberty to go our *own* way to *Heaven*; we do readily *grant* that there is but *one* way thither; *I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me*, saith Christ Jesus; *There is no name under Heaven given unto men, whereby they may be saved, but the name of Jesus of Nazareth*, saith the Apostle; nor do we pretend any other way, but by *Christ Jesus*, nor other Conditions, but *Faith*, *Repentance* and sincere *Obedience* to the *Laws* of the *Gospel*.

2. But tho' the way to *Heaven* be but *one*, and the great *essential* duties of *Religion* be the same to *all*, and have the same obligation upon *all*, yet the *manner* of performing them may be *various*, and very much of the *Controversie*, and many of the *Divisions* that are among *Christians* derive from thence: We are all obliged to make our *Prayers* and *Supplications* to God, but it may be done by a *form*, or by extemporaneous *conceptions*; all that are admitted into the *Communion* of Gods Church, are obliged to be Baptized at their admission, but this *Sacrament* may be administered just according to the *Institution* of Christ, and practice of his *Apostles*, (which is surely much the better way) or with some *appendages* and humane *Inventions*: All Church-members are obliged to *examine themselves*, and partake in the *Body* and *Blood* of our Lord: The *Sacramental Elements* may be given them either *Kneeling*, *Standing* or *Sitting*, and in leavened or unleavened Bread. Many other *varieties* might be observed in the *manner* of performing the common *Duties* of *Religion*, but to avoid *prolixity*, we shall pretermitt and pass them over.

3. In the *Modes* of performing our *publick* Duties and *Worship* to God, we do *humbly* begg we may have our *Liberty*: Where God hath *bound* us, we desire no *liberty*, where God hath left us at *large*, we desire we may not be *restrained*; if any *accident* or combination of *accidents* shall make the *restraint* of our *Liberty* necessary, we shall submit to such *restraint*; but where there is no necessity

necessity of it, we know no obligation lying upon us to resign it, or bring our selves into bondage: Were the Rulers of the Church the absolute Lords of it, we should make their Wills the measure of our Faith and Obedience; but since they are but Stewards, we shall obey them when they commend to us the Laws of God, and in other things when they give us good reason for it; but in things that have no reason to justify, but many to condemn them, we hope they will have us excused.

4. We shall take no Liberty to reproach the established Religion of the Nation, or any of those that do attend it: We shall Serve and Worship God after our own manner, and rejoice in such Liberty and Permission, but shall not meddle with, much less Defame that of the publick Congregations: We do believe there are many good Christians that live in the Communion of the Parish Churches, and we would do so too, could we have Ministers of tolerable sufficiency, and could we satisfy the scruples of our Consciences concerning the Lawfulness of it. Would they retain the same charitable Opinion concerning us, there might be a Unity of Affection, Tranquility and Peace among us, and all the Cruelty, Violence and Oppressions on the one side, and all the Complaints and Outcries of Injustice and Persecution on the other, might come to a period, and receive a determination.

5. We know you account us Schismatics, and many Attempts have been made, and Endeavours used to prove us so, and in your apprehensions with manifest success. 'Tis not the design of these few Sheets to discuss that Controversie; all that we shall say concerning it, is only this. If we had departed from your Communion voluntarily, and for the sake of any necessary Truth or Law of God, we could not have excused our selves from that imputation; but, since you have forced us out of it by your own Laws, and by the Imposition of things (if not certainly false) of doubtful and unnecessary nature, we hope you will excuse us, and take the blame upon your selves. If men may make the terms and conditions of Church-communion, Schism will be a vagrant and uncertain thing, and 'twill be impossible to fix the nature of it, or to tell wherein it consists; that may be Schism one year, that is none the next; and that may be Schism in one Church, that is none in another, and 'twill be of so lubricious and slippery a nature, that no man will be able to lay hold of it; whereas, in our Opinion, Schism is of a certain and determinate Essence, as are all other Sins.

6 But let it be supposed (for we will not grant) that we are Schismatics, we hope we may be permitted to worship God in our

own *Congregacions*, notwithstanding that *supposition*: We know no *Law of Coa* that will allow or justify *Church Governours* in the Persecution of all *Schismaticks* to ruine or destruction: We have looked after it, but we cannot find it either in the *New Testament* nor in the *Old*: We are *Christians* as well as you, we adore the same *God*, we seek *Salvation* by the same *Christ*, we believe the same *Bible*, we are the *Children* of the same *Father*, we expect a part in the same *Inheritance*, by the same *Will and Testament*. They are the words of *Du Plessis* in a case something like our own; Why then may we not have our liberty of serving *God* in our own *Assemblies*?

7. The *Novations* had their liberty at *Rome*, *Alexandria*, *Constantinople*, and in some parts of *Phrygia*. The *Meletians* had their liberty in *Alexandria*, and some parts of *Egypt*. The *Donatists* were very numerous, and very tumultuous and barbarous in *Africa*, as *St. Austin* reports them, and yet they were permitted for very many years, though reputed *Schismaticks*, and that deservedly too. The *Protestants* in *France* (accounted *Schismaticks* by the *Papists*) were permitted the liberty of their own *Churches* till within these two or three years, and might have been so still, if the *French King* had not been influenced by two or three *Jesuites*. The like liberty they have in *Poland*, *Helvetia*, and many parts of *Germany*; and we hope the *Church of England* will be as kind to us, as the *Church of Rome* is to their and our *Protestant Brethren*.

'Tis said that *Schism* is a *Damnable Sin*, and reckoned among the works of the flesh, and that the *Primitive Fathers* have spoken some things against it: to which we shall only say, that we do not know that we have been proved guilty of *Schism* as yet, and we would desire those that thrust us out of their *Communion* to look at home, and when they have proved themselves innocent, let them cast *Stones* at us if they please. We have read, that those that cause *Separations* are the *Schismaticks*; and if so, we are afraid, that tho the *Church of England* may wash their hands of that charge, they will hardly be found clean. This (we think) the worthy *Author* of that Book called *The Protestant Reconciler*, hath proved beyond all contradiction.

SECT. V.

1. But if you be immutable in the *Opinion* of our being damnable *Schifmaricks*, we will make this further request unto you: Pray suffer us to inherit the *fruit of our own wayes*, and to be filled with our own devices. This is a *Supplication* that peradventure may look something odd, and *Strange*, but it proceeds upon your *Hypothesis*, not upon our own; for after the way that you call *Schism*, we worship the God of our Fathers, and by those wayes and methods of Devotion that you account damnable, we hope to save our Souls.

2. We cannot prevail with our selves to think that you have any extraordinary kindness for us: If persecuting and afflicting us be *demonstrations* of love, we do confesse we have had more of them than we have desired, but we have hitherto looked on them as *Indications* of hatred; and why may we not therefore be permitted the *Liberty* of our Assemblies, as a means of promoting your own wishes and common Imprecations? Are you indeed unwilling of our damnation, and tender least we perish? we are glad of it if it be true, but 'twill be hard to *impress* upon our minds any such kind of perswasion.

3. The favour that we have now begged, is no other than what you grant to many of your own Church: how many *Conventicles* of riotous *Sensualists*, and debauched *Villains* do assemble every day to serve their God, and promote their own Damnation? how numerous and frequent are the Assemblies of *Drunkards*, *Whore-masters*, *Blasphemers*, *Atheists*, *Scoffers* and *Deriders* of Christ Jesus and his Gospel? and are they not permitted so to do without any disturbance or molestation? what *Warrants*, *Constables*, *Justices of the Peace*, or *Files of Musketeers* are ever employed to *attaque* or seize them? surely *Swearing*, *Whoring*, *Drunkennes* and *Blasphemy* are against the *Laws*, as well as *Praying*, *Preaching*, *Reading* the Scriptures, and other Exercises of Religion; and, in our judgment as likely a way to *Hell*. How comes it to pass that *liberty* of Conscience is permitted in one case, and denied in the other? are you willing that your own dear Brethren, and Members of your Church should go down to the *infernal Pit*, and are you loath that we

that you account your *Enemies* should come within the Prospect or *Neighbourhood* of it? This is a strange *preposterous* kind of *Charity*, and as 'tis without Precept (for ought that we can find) so, we could be very well content, that there were no Instances or *Examples* of it in the *Practises* of men.

4. Let us have but as much liberty to *serve God*, as your own good Friends have to serve *the Devil*, and we will ask you no more: We speak now according to our *own Notions* and *Apprehensions* of things: We do think, that in our *Congregations* we do worship the great God in and through Christ Jesus, and that your Brethren in the fore-named Assemblies do *serve the Devil*, and we are much *assured* that we are not mistaken: Why this Petition should be *rejected*, we cannot well *comprehend*. Is preaching the Doctrine of *Faith* and *Obedience*, a greater Offence to you than *Blasphemy* and *Drunkennes*? is praying to the *Majesty of Heaven* more nauseous to you, than *Adultery* and *Fornication*? is being at a *Conventicle* a greater Abomination in your eyes, than being at a *Brothel-house*? are you better pleased with the *Oaths* and *Execrations* of your own Church-members, at their Assemblies, than with the *Confessions*, *Prayers* and *Thanksgivings* which are at ours? or do you think that our *Worship* and *Service* to God, will be more mischievous to *Church* and *State*, than the *Looseness*, *Profaneness* and *Abominations* of your own *beloved Disciples*? do you imagine, that the solemn and *serious* devotions of our *Congregations*, will call louder to Heaven for *vengeance*, than the *Bedlam-noise*, and profane *Festivals* and *Revells* of your *Tavern Assemblies*? your permitting *liberty* to the one, and laying *constraint* on the other, seem to import and bespeak such *conceptions*; but we could not think that you could give any *assent* unto them, had we not been told, that some men are *given up to believe a lie*.

SECT. VI.

1. We pray, *do by us* as you would be *done unto*, and give us such *measure* as you would should be given to you, were you in our *State* and *Case*: This is no unreasonable *Request*, it being established upon a Precept of our Saviour. Suppose you differed no more from the *Papists*, than we do from you; and suppose further, that their *Doctrine* were the approved *Religi-*

on of the Countrey in which you lived, would you be contented to be persecuted to *Beggery* and *want*? would you be willing to be *ruined* and *destroyed* for such *varieties* and *differences*? could you see your *Houses* broken open, and your *Wives* and *Children* affrighted to *Sickness* and *Death*? could you be dragged to *Prison*, and laid among *Villains* and *Vermin*, and think you were fairly and equitably dealt withall, and that you had no reason to *complain*? could you think such *Treatment* no other than a just *recompence* of your dissent from the *Doctrine* and *Discipline* of the *Church*? We cannot believe that you could approve of those *Rigours* in your own case, which you think fit to *exercise* upon us without any *Regrett* or *Remorse* of Spirit.

2. 'Tis not many years since some of you were *treated* somewhat *ruggedly* for your dissent from the *Methods* of *Worship* and *Systems* of *Doctrine* and *Opinion* countenanced by those that had usurped the Government of the Nation: 'Twas then almost as criminal to hear *Common-prayer*, as 'tis now to *refuse* it; and and to own the *39 Articles*, as 'tis now to *reject* them; to preach *Loyalty* and *Obedience*, as 'tis now to foment *Sediton* and *Rebellion*. As we remember these things with *abhorrence*, so, we are sure you did bear them with great *uneasiness* and *complaint*. 'Tis true, they were *Usurpers* that imposed upon you, and *persecuted* you, but was that all the reason of your *trouble* and *lamentation*? would you not have thought it *hard*, and *intollerable* almost, to have been forbidden to have *worshipped* God by the *English Liturgy*, or to have kneeled at the *Sacrament*, or to have baptized your *Children* with *Godfathers*, and the sign of the *Cross*, even by lawful *Governours*? and would you not have *complained* much more if you had been persecuted to utter ruine for these things? would you not have cryed out of *Tyranny* and *Oppression*, of *Barbarousness*, *Inhumanity*, and the exercises of an *Empire* over the *Judgments* and *Consciences* of men? We are of the mind that these things would have pinched and been grievous, though they had been imposed by *just* and *rightful Authority*.

3. 'Tis not *impossible*, but that you may fall under the *Roman Yoke*, and scourge, and then peradventure the Words of *Adonibezeeck* may occur unto your Minds: *Threescore and ten Kings, having their Thumbs, and great Toes cut off, gathered their Meat under my Table; as I have done, so God hath required me.* 'Tis no *unusual* thing to observe men *paid* in their own kind. The *Providence* of God, that superin-

tends the *affairs* of the world, doth very frequently *retriagate*, and punish men by the *same Rods*, by which they have punished and afflicted others; 'Tis observed that the *Duke of Guise*, and the *Cardinal of Lorraine*, were slain in the very same *Room* in which they had sat, and contrived the *Bartholomew Massacre*. *Henry the third of France* was murdered by *Clement the Monk* at *St. Clon*, in the same Chamber where he presided in a *Consultation*, to the same intent and purpose: How *Charles the Ninth* dyed, every one knows, that have read any thing in *History*; he expired wallowing in his own blood, and vomiting it out at all the *Conduits* of his Body, as a just Judgment on him, that had so barbarously shed it through all the *Provinces* of his Realm. They are the words of *De Serres*, *vid. eum in vit. Caroli noni*.

4. We make no doubt you would be willing to meet with Mercy from the *Romanists*, if God should at any time deliver you into their hands; you would be glad to find some favour in their Eyes, you would be loth to be ruined by *Rogues*, and brought to a *Morsel of Bread* by *Informers*, and *Men of Violence* and *Rapine*: We pray give to us what you would expect to receive from them; and if you desire to find Mercy, be careful to shew some bowels of *Pity* and *Compassion*. Remember, he that leadeth into Captivity, shall go into Captivity; he that killeth with the Sword, shall be killed by the Sword; If you will persecute, you shall be persecuted; if you will destroy, you shall be destroyed. *Vediamo la crudelta tornare in capo a i Crudeli*: The inhumane are oftentimes barbarously treated, and those that put off Man, are encountered with Beasts.

5. The World is a very uncertain State, all things in it shift and change their places: That part of the *Wheel* that is now on high, will instantly be on the ground; those that Lord it as they list, and prescribe to the *Consciences* and *Practices* of men, by an *Empire* and *Tyranny* utterly insupportable, may soon be imposed upon by *Prescriptions* equally burthensome, and a *Pride* as domineering and inexorable as their own.

6. The mutability of things in this uncertain World, was not unaptly signified by that humourfome fellow, that being asked by his Friend how he would be Buried, answered, with his Face downwards; thereby intimating, that tho he were laid in the ground with a prostrate front, yet after some tract and period of time, he should revert and turn his aspect towards Heaven. We think it might be no unprofitable Meditation to those that tread us under foot as the mire in the Street, to consider that their day may

may come, and that there are men in the *World* that are as *Proud* and *Imperious*, as *Cruel* and as *Incompassionate* as your selves, and that even we that lye now on our *Faces*, may stand upright again; for God is able to raise and lift us up, and 'tis the frequent method of his *Providence*, to abase those that walk in *Pride*, and to give *Grace* and shew favour to the *Humble*.

SECT. VII.

1. We do most heartily desire you to consider, whether these *Prosecutions* be ever like to obtain the end you intend and design by them: By them you intend either our *Conversion* to the Church of *England*, or our utter Subversion and *Destruction*. We have said already, that Arguments taken from the *sale of our Goods*, the Imprisonment of our *Persons*, and Seizure of our *Estates*, have no force nor cogency upon our minds; they are no more affected with them, than our *Eyes* are with the sound of an *Organ*, or our *Taste* with the beams of *Light*, and lustre of the *Sun*. Without doubt (sayes a very grave Historian) we have learned by experience, that *Religion* is neither planted nor rooted out by violent means. *Mens Consciences* must be gently intreated, not violently forced. De Sorres.

2. But if you should design to destroy us, give us leave to ask you, whether you do imagine the present *Prosecutions* a probable or likely means of accomplishing it? have you never read the *Histories* of past Ages and Generations? do you know nothing of former times? have you never observed such means fail, and such attempts prove utterly unsuccessful? 'twere easie to produce *Volumes* of Proofs and Instances thereof without number. We shall mention the words of Du Plessis, in his *Remonstrance* to the *Estates* of Blois, where speaking concerning the *Hugonots*, in the person of a *Roman Catholick* he thus expresse himself: *Au Commencement nous les avons brusles, &c. At first we burnt them alive, without any distinction of sex or quality; we were so far from destroying them thereby, that on the contrary, they extinguished our Fires by their Blood, and were increased by our Flames: Afterwards we drowned them, and one would think that they multiplied like Fish in the waters. When their numbers were increased, we fought, and beat them in many Battels; but tho we defeated them, we could never overcome them. We made them drunk with Wine, or rather Blood, at a Royal Nuptial Festivity; we chopt off their Heads whilst they were sleeping, and within a few*

few dayes we beheld them with our Eyes revive, and rise again as strong as before, and with Heads more hard and brazen than ever. Vid. Memoirs, Vol. 2. Pag. 23.

3. And what if your *Persecutions* should have the same effect? what if our numbers should be *encreased* thereby? and we dare assure you, 'tis neither impossible nor improbable; for when we are persecuted, and hunted like *Beasts* of Prey, the *Common-people* (that know no hurt by us, but only that we do not pray by your *Liturgie*, nor serve God according to your *Laws*, tho' we do it according to *his*, which a man would think should be as well) will pity and love us: They will think, that we are more likely to be the *Servants of God*, and of his *Christ*, than those that persecute and destroy us; They will think us more likely to be *Doves*, than the *Kites* and *Hawks* that rend us in pieces and devour us. They will espouse our *Opinions*, and come over to our *Communion* and *Congregations*.

4. Yea, almost all those of your own *Church*, that have any sense or fear of God before their eyes, will be moved with *Bowels* of Compassion towards us: They will think us more worthy of the favour and protection of the Government and *Laws*, than those Sons of *Cain*, that seek our Calamity and Ruine. Some there are that have been sufficiently sharp against us, (and peradventure, much of the present *Persecutions* may be owing thereunto) who, we make no doubt, will be kinder to us within a little time, because we believe they fear God. *Relutions* frequently quarrel, and sometimes on pitiful occasions; but there is a radicated love in them towards each other, which prevails against all their Heats and *Passions*, and doth reconcile them again to a mutual tenderness and dearness. Good men may quarrel, and conceive little piques and animosities against each other, (so did *Paul* and *Barnabas*) but at the bottom there lies that fear of God, and love to each other, that will reconcile them again, especially, when one or both come to be afflicted and distressed. *Hoop-er* and *Ridley* were very good Friends when they were in *Gaol*, tho' there were some little differences between them when they were at Liberty.

5. We find by observation, that among the Members of your Church, those that are most replenished with the Love of God and Man, and do partake most in the nature and Spirit of the Gospel, are the greatest Enemies to our Persecution; they do already pity us, and will do more as our Afflictions grow and press upon us: The learned Author of the *Protestant Reconciler*, the Author of the *Conformists Pleas for the Nonconformists*, Mr. *Samuel Bold*, and the

COUNTRY

Country Conformist, all thorough *Church-men*, (but as we believe, of candid and Christian Tempers and Spirits) have sufficiently declared that they are no promoters of *Persecution*, but have a very hearty *aversion* for it.

6. And all men of the *same Spirit* will favour us, and oppose your *Severe* and *Cruel* manner of *Proceedings*: You will divide your own *Church*, and encrease our numbers by your *Persecutions*, and perhaps there may be *no way* of rooting out *Dissenting Protestants* in *England*, but by turning it into a *Wilderness*, which whosoever shall attempt, will in our Opinion attempt also his own ruine.

SECT. VIII.

1. We do beseech you not to be very *forward* in believing the *Clamours* and *Outcries* of your *Clergy*; when they Preach the *Gospel* of their great Lord and Master, we do heartily wish you would give a *firm* and *unshaken Faith* unto them, but when they give you *Characters* of the *Dissenters*, and make fierce *Declamations* against the mischiefs of *Separation*, and variety of *Religions* (as they call it, in one and the same *Kingdom*, we do most humbly begg, that you would *suspend* your Faith, 'till you have considered what are the *mischiefs* of a forced and *constrained Union*: we say with the *Great Du Plellis*; *We do not doubt but that it were most to be wished, that in one Kingdom there were but one Religion, or rather one way of Worshipping the true God; such a Union cannot be too much desired, and might we have our Option, one were more seemly than many; but since either the destiny of this Realm, or the disorder of our Church is such, that we have two, in troth 'tis better to permit them, than to ruine or weaken our selves, as hitherto we have done, that we might have but one: In the Body of man, Maladies are sometimes continued for the sake of Health, and are as Remedies against those that are more fatal and dangerous: 'Tis a great trouble to have an Issue alwayes running in some part of the Body, and 'twere much better to have none at all, but 'tis better to have it, and keep it open, than to close it up and dye: Thus that wise and good man, vid. pag. 41. ubi supra.*

2. We do think it *eligible*, that all that profess the *Religion* of *Christ Jesus* in this Nation, did worship him after the *same manner*, but we think it *much better* that they should *Worship* him after *undry manners*, than that a *great number* of them should be *destroyed* and *ruined*; and we do wonder that *all men* that have *Brains* or *Hearts* do not think so too; for is it not better that *twenty, forty, or a hundred thousand* persons should worship God a little *variously* from

from our Constitution, than that they should be *beggared, banished, imprisoned, or committed* to the Hangman to conduct them to their *Graves*? Is it not better that they should pray *without book*, in their separate *Meetings*, than that they should pray without them at the *Gallows*? Is it not better that they should preach in *Conventicles*, than upon a *Scaffold* or place of Execution? In our Opinion it seems no great difficulty to determine these *Enquiries*, and we think that a little of the *tenderness* of the *Christian nature*, and some sense of humane frailty and imperfection, are qualifications enough for the resolution of them.

3. There are many things *desirable*, that are not *attainable* in this World: 'Tis desirable that all the *Churches* upon earth, were of one mind and one judgment, but how to attain such a *Union*, who can tell? 'twere to be wished that all the *members* of the Church of England were good *Christians*, and did not only profess the *Religion* of Christ Jesus, but live under the *Power* and Authority of his *Laws*: 'Twere to be desired that the persons that constitute our *Parish Churches* were of good *Understanding*, sound *Judgment*, and exemplary *Conversation*; but how and by what means shall all these *fine things* be obtained? must men be *Fined*, *Prosecuted* and *Imprisoned* for the want of them? or are those the *proper means* of obtaining them? Must we have no *peace* or *quiet* in the *World*, 'till they be possessed and enjoyed? Then farewell *Peace*, as long as the *Sun* and *Moon* endure, or 'till the coming of the *new Heavens* and the *new Earth*, in which *Righteousness* doth dwell: In short, we must take the *World* as we find it, and expect no more from it than is in it; perfect *Peace*, *Harmony* and *Agreement* in *Judgment*, *Affection* and *Practice* is reserved for *Heaven*, 'tis very imperfectly obtained on *Earth*; those that cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect measure of it as this world is capable of, are the great *Plagues* and *Firebrands* of *Christendome*, and the Churches of God therein: *Tolerable Faults*, *Differences* and *Imperfections* must be connived at and endured; or else we must have either no *Peace*, or no *serious Religion*; intolerable ones must be restrained, and punished according to their nature and demand, and with such *unwillingness*, *delay* and *tenderness* as is agreeable to the *Goodness* and *Kindness* of Christianity. By these two *Rules* we do confidently affirm, more *Peace* will be obtained, and with more advantage to true *Piety* and *Godliness*, than by any other means and endeavours whatever they be; what are tolerable, and what intolerable faults and errors of *Judgment* and *Practice*; we shall not discourse, others have done it, and there is no great difficulty therein.

4. 'Tis often said by *Clergy men*, and some others, (that should be better skilled in *History*, and the *Mysteries* of Government, than to beleive it) that variety of *Religion*, or rather *varieties* in the same *Religion*, are prejudicial to the *Civil Peace*. This *Maxim* (saith a very great Man) hath much more devided us, than the diversity in *Religion*, that is among us, but either by the experience of what we see elsewhere, we must confess it to be false, or acknowledg our selves the most discordant, and unhappy people in the *World*. The *Germans* have two *Religions* in the same *Cities*, and sometimes in the same *Houses*, and yet live quietly, under the same *Emperour*, and *Laws*. We must therefore say, that they are not our *Religions*, but our *Passions* that trouble and disturb our *Peace*, and commonly they are the *Pussions* of such Men, as have no kindness for any *Religion*: The *Switzers* are partly *Protestant*, and partly *Catholick*, yet they live in a very great tranquillity, and free from all disorders. In *Holland* they permit almost all *Religions*, yet the Government is not rusted, or disordered by it. In the *Cities* of *Mastricht*, and *Bois le Duc*, the *Inhabitants*, are partly *Protestants*, and partly *Papists*, and live together in mutual *Friendship*, and *Love*. The *Polonians* have always had the *Greek*, and *Roman* *Religion*, they have had divers *Bishops*, divers *Synods*, & great difference in some important *Articles* of *Religion*, yet they never came from *Words* to *Blows*, but unanimously obey their *Kings*, and contribute equally to the *Defence* of their *Country* against their common *Enemies*.

5. These same persons are not wanting to give us evil *Characters*, and to lead us with infamous *Titles*, and appellations. We would most humbly beseech you to give no hasty credit to them, for whatever truth there may be in their other discourses, we do assure you, that what they say concerning us, is not *Gospel*. They report many things concerning us, which we believe they would not say, did they know us, or had they any conversation with us. They avoid us as *Heathens*, and *Publicans*, and then report all manner of evil of us ignorantly, and falsely. *Justin Martyr* complains of *Crescens* the *Philosopher*, as ἐμὲ δὲ μὴ ἐπιστάτα, Ἰουδαία καὶ Ἰουδαίους, &c. That to ingratiate himself with the People, he publicly calumniated the *Christians*, as *Atheists*, and *Ungodly*, when in the mean time, he was utterly ignorant both of them and their *Doctrine*. Vid. *Auf. in Apol. Prima.* pag. 46. We have complained of it already; we now beg they may not be believed, till they prove what they affirm concerning us. Accusations were allowed by the ancient *Romans*, but *Calumniation* they abhorred, and we think 'twas just, and generous in them so to doo.

SECT. 9.

1. We would also humbly beg, a present *suspension* of the *Laws*, till His Majesty shall in his peculiar *Wisdom* think fit to call a *Parliament*, and ease us of the *fear* and *burthen* of them. We cannot but feel their *weight*, nor can we think it otherwise, than *heavy*, and *oppressive*. We are *men* as others are, and tho we may *patiently* endure the *Penalties* executed upon us, yet we cannot put off the *sense* of them, nor the *desire* of being *freed* from them. And to whom shall we *Address* our *selves* for *deliverance*, to whom shall we make our *applications*, for *redemption* from the curse of the *Laws*, and wrath of the *enraged Statutes*.

2. We know not well what to doe. We are weary of the *burdens* that lye upon us, and would fain be *eased* of them, but how to get them taken from our *Backs*, we do not understand. We will *im-plore* the *Intercession*, of the more *noble*, *generous*, and *Christian* of our *Adversaries*. You have access to His Majesty's presence, and liberty of *approach* before him, and would you but put on so much *bowels* of *mercy* and *compassion*, as to become our *Mediators*, we are very confident you might *prevail*. You might set us at *liberty* from all our great *Calamities*, and our greater *fears*. You might restore *smiles* to our countenances, and *joy* to our *Souls*. We are *now* neither *alive* nor *dead*. We neither partake in the *pleasures*, and *satisfactions* of the *living*, nor in the *rest*, and *repose* of those that are *departed* hence. How easie a thing were it for you, to recover us from this *dismal*, *dark*, and *uneasie State*? With a few words of your *Mouths*, you might give life to *many thousands* of languishing Persons, and by your *Mediation* with our *Great Prince*, become their *Temporal Saviours* and *Redeemers*.

3. And what is there *more worthy* of your *Greatness*, and your *Birth*? What more worthy of *Gentlemen*, *Englishmen*, and *Christians*? What is the advantage of your *Riches*, your *Power*, and your *Honour*, and why are they *desirable*? Is it not that you may do *much good*, and shew *mercy* to those that *want*, and stand in need of it? And have you not an excellent *pattern*, and a great *example* of it? Doth not God do good continually? Doth he not cause his *Sun* to *Rise* upon the *just* and *unjust*, and his *Rain* to descend upon the *evil*, and the *good*? And are you not bound to *imitate* him, and be *perfect* as your *Heavenly Father* is *perfect*? To doe good, is to doe like God, and 'tis only the *Great*, that are capable of it, in any *valuable* degree or measure.

4. We are abundantly *certaine*, that you your selves are *men*, and liable to the *same sins* and *imperfections* with others of *humane Race*.

Your

Your Greatness doth not exempt you from the common corruption of Mankind, nor set you above the reach and influence of Temptations; You are Sinners, and will need the Grace and Mercy of God, as well as those of inferior quality and condition. We are sure you will not dare to plead your *innocency*, before that God, who chargeth the Angels with folly, and in whose sight the Heavens are not clean. We do not doubt, but that you will appeal from his Justice to his Mercy Seat, and Implore the Pardoning Mercy of God, and the Intercessions of our Saviour.

5. Will you need Mercy, and will you shew none? Will you have use of, and occasion for the connivence of God Almighty, and will you remit nothing to us, of the rigour of the Laws? Will you need the Intercessions of Christ Jesus with his Father, and will you refuse to intercede on our behalf with our Prince? Would you be willing, that the Holy Jesus should present your Petitions, and Supplications to the great God, and will you refuse to present ours to the King? Would you be loath that the Son of God should refuse to do the Office of a Mediatour on your behalf, and will you with an unyielding obstinacy, and peremptoriness of purpose and resolution, refuse to do that office on ours? Must we expect no favour from you? Will you do nothing for us with our Sovereign?

6. We are resolved to hope better things, and to be confident, that we shall not be deceived in our expectations. There is a Brave, Noble, and Christian Spirit, in some of those that are our Adversaries, and surely they will not see us perish, without opening their Mouths for our preservation. Tis to those that we make our Supplications. Tis those that we would make our Intercessors. Others we know, will beg nothing for us, unless it be an Ax, or a Gibbet, which are Favours, we do not desire to receive, by their Mediation.

SECT. 10.

1. We would humbly, and modestly desire, that whatsoever liberty, or favour is granted to us, may be without revocation, unless upon just and reasonable forfeiture. If it be granted us on this condition, we shall think our selves sure enough in the possession of it, for we never intend to do any thing, that may occasion a seizure, or deprivation thereof.

2. But since 'tis hard to engage, for every individual in a Community, we would further intreat, that the whole Body of Dissenters might not forfeit the liberty, that may be granted them, by the faults and follies of some single persons. Let not the Innocent be punished

for the sake of the *guilty*, nor those that *peaceably* use their *Prince's* Favour, for the sake of those, that may *turbulently* abuse it.

3. Though we shall be *thankful*, if his *Majesty* should only *connive* at our *Liberty*, and permit us the *Worship* of God after our own *manner* and *way*, without any *Security* against the recalling of it : yet we must say, that to live in *perpetual danger* is a very *uneasie* State. Men take no pleasure to sit under *drawn Swords*, suspended by single *hairs* or *threads*, though it be at the *richest*, and most delicious *Festivals*. Few take any *delight* to stand upon *Rocks* and *Precipices*, especially if it be lawful for him that *sits*, to throw them thence. We do not *desire* to live in the neighbourhood of a *burning fiery Furnace*, when every *Regue* that hath abandoned God, and all good *Conscience*, may with impunity cast us *alive* into it. We would be glad to possess and enjoy our *Liberty*, with the *Licence* of his *Majesty*, and the *Laws*.

4. Were this granted us, our *minds* would be very much at rest, we should be free from those *anxious cares*, and *fears*, that do almost *continually* oppose us; we should with great *alacrity* mind the *Business* of our *Callings*, and with better *Ability* and *Chearfulness*, support the *Government* and *Honour* of our *King*; fear *cramps* and *fetters* the *Active Powers* of *Mankind*, it *Freezes* the *Blood* and *Spirits*, and makes them almost as *useless* as the *Dead*. *Hope* and *Security* infuses a *Life*, and *Vigour* into the *Souls* of Men, and puts them upon *Action* and *Employment* *advantageous* to their *Persons*, *Families*, and other *Societies* of Men.

5. Had we the *Security* of the *Laws* for our *Liberties*, we should sit under our *Vines*, and *Fig-Trees*, without any *Fears* or *Confernations*. We should all *unanimously* Love and Adore our *King*, as the *Father* of his *Countrey*, and the *Common Protector* of all his *Subjects*; we should be all *ambitious* of *Serving* and *Contributing* to his *Grandeur*, yea, we should be willing to adventure our *Lives* and *Fortunes* for the making him one of the most *glorious Monarchs* upon Earth.

SECT. II.

I. We do with all *humility* beseech you to *believe*, that such hath been the *Birth*, *Education*, and *Spirit* of some of us, that *nothing* but *conscience* towards God, and fear of *everlasting* *Condemnation*, would have made us *chuse* the *way* that we have taken, and the *party* that we have *espoused*. We have not been without *inclinations* to *Conformity*, both *formerly*; and of *late*; since the *Laws* have raged so *furiouly* against us; we having not been without *temptations* to have chosen the *way*, in which *dignities*, *Riches* and *Honours* are to be found, (nor do we think so meanly of our selves, but that we might have obtained

our share in them) but *Conscience* hath laid those *Blocks* in our ways, that we have not been able to get over, nor we believe never shall. We have Transcribed some *Paragraphs* from *Du Plessis*, we will take the *Liberty* to take a few more *Lines* from him. Thus he expresses himself, speaking to the King. I shall without fiction tell your Majesty, that for these Twelve Years, and more, I have endeavoured by all means to become a *Catholic*, but hitherto I have not been able to attain it; I have often considered, that after the favour of God, there is nothing in the World so precious, as that of a mans Prince. I have *Flesh* enough to desire the *Riches* and *Honour* of this World, and not so little *Spirit*, but that I know, the Religion that I follow, is not the way in which they may be found: I set my self to read all the Books that I could find, I conferred with Learned Men wheresoever I met with them. My *Flesh* and *Spirit* always concurred to Fortifie their Arguments, and I desired nothing more then to be conquered by them. In fine Sir, I must tell your Majesty, my *Conscience* would, and did prevail against all their Discourses, altho'ugh it saw nothing but *Disgraces*, *Losses*, and *Dangers*, as the Reward of the *Victory*. Thus fare that good Man.

2. Nothing almost could have better expressed the motions and passions of our Souls, then the words of this excellent Person. We have not been without dispositions to have taken the way of serving God, that might have advanced us, or at least have supplied us with Food, and Rayment, and necessary support for our Selves and Families. We have read, and considered, what hath been said to justify and perswade conformity. Our own *Flesh*, *Passions*, and *Affections*, have Disputed earnestly, and subtilly in favour of it, but *Conscience* hath hitherto prevailed. We are afraid of the *Worm* that never dyes, and the *Fire* that never does go out. We chuse rather to serve God in a poor and mean condition, with the approbation of our *Consciences*, then in, and with a more splendid, and large Estate, to the regret, and offence of them.

3. We are not in love with *Poverty* and *Rags*, no more then we are with *Sicknesses* and *Diseases*. 'Tis no pleasure to us, to be distressed, for the maintenance of our selves, and those that are near, and dear to us. Some of us have *Children*, that would be glad of other *Employments*, then a *Wheel*, or a *Cart*; and we have the tenderne's, and bowels of *Parents* towards them, and though we do not desire great things for them, yet we cannot but wish them a little advanced above the common drudgeries, and servilities of life. But all this, and a great deal more we can endure, when we remember that our Lord *Jesus*, who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with

wish God; yet took upon him the form of a *Servant*, and made himself of no Reputation.

4. We would be glad to have the *favour* of our *Sovereign*, and of his *Inferiour Magistrates*, and *Officers*. The *wraith* of a *King* is as the *roaring* of a *Lion*, and the *displeasure* of his *Ministers*, and *Servants*, is uneasy enough, as we find by *wooful* experience. We take no pleasure in the *frowns* of a *Mighty Monarch*, nor do we chuse to be liable to *thunder*. We are not fond of the *indignation* of his *Officers*, nor is there any *reason* for it, that we can find. We should rejoyce in the *favour* of *him*, and *them*. But there is a *King* *Superiour* to him, and his *Officers* are much more terrible, and *dreadful*. If we cannot have the *favour* of *them all*, we will make that which we think the *wisest*, and the *safest choice*. We will chuse the *favour* of *God* (the *great Sovereign* of the *World*) and of his *Angels*, the *Ministers* of his *Empire*, before that of any *Prince* or *Subordinate Officers* upon *Earth*.

SECT. 12.

1. The last request that we shall *presume* to make, is that you will please to *believe*, what we have *said*, in our own *behalf*, and *vindication*. We do not know, that we have *forfeited* the reputation of our *truth*, or made our selves incredible by *falsifications*, and *impostures*. What others may have *done*, is nothing to us, we only affirm our own *truth*, *uprightness*, and *Integrity*.

2. What *promises* we have *made*, or may further *make*, in the following part of this *Discourse*, we intend (by the *Grace* of *God*) to keep by an *invincible* observation. We think we have promised nothing, but what is *agreeable* to the *Laws* of the *Gospel*, and what is so we are bound to *observe*, and we will do it, whatever may be the *effects*, and consequences *thereof*; we hope we shall suffer no *prejudice* thereby in *time*, but if we do, we will rejoyce in the *prospect* of the *advantages*, and compensations of *Eternity*.

3. We do not doubt, but that there be *those*, that will endeavour to *render* all that we *have said*, or can say, *suspicious* and *incredible*. They are loath that we should have any *favour* permitted, or allowed us by our *Prince*; and to hinder it, will represent all that we say, as *Faction*, *Romance*, and *Hypocrisie*. They hate us with an *implacable* hatred, and would be *very glad* that all others might *do so*, and to that they expound all our *Professions* into dissimulation and *falsehood*.

end. Whether you will believe us, (that surely are better acquainted with our own *hearts*, then those that revile and traduce us) or our *inventions*; we cannot tell, but we *promise* our selves much from your

your *Generosity, Justice, and Grandeur*. We expect no great belief from the raging *Furioso*, and the railing *Hectors*. We have no hopes to be believed by the *Foaming, Raving* Persecutors. But we have some confidence, that those *Sons of the Church*, both among the *Gentry* and *Clergy*, that partake in the *Christian Nature and Temper*, will gain some *Faith* to our *Professions and Affirmations*.

CHAP. IV.

The Dissenters Resolutions.

SECT. I.

I. **W**E will endeavour to walk in *all good Conscience towards God*, and towards Men. If we may not be permitted, to Worship God in our Publick assemblies, we will do it *as we can*, for we may not cease *all Worship* of the Deity, what ever it Costs us. When the Churches of God were persecuted, in the *Primitive*, and more *Modern* Ages of the World, and could not have the *Liberty* of Worshipping their *Maker, and Redeemer* at *Stated Times* and Places, they Worshipped him as they could, in *Woods and Groves*, in *Vaults* and *Crotes*, in *Charnel Houses*, and *Sepulchers* of the Dead, and herein we shall follow their Example. If we may not *serve God*, and Build up one anothers *Faith* and *Godliness*, where, and when we *would*, we will do it, where and when we *can*.

2. We will worship him in our *Families* by Reading, and Hearing his Word, by Sanctifying his *Sabbaths*, and calling upon his Name. We Read in the *Scriptures* of Churches in private *Houses*, whether there were no other Persons, *Members* of those Churches, but the *Members* of those Families we will not say (tho we judg the contrary most probable) but this we will Say and Do also, we will forme our Families as much after the likeness of Churches, as we are able, we will performe all those *Acts of Worship* in them, that *Lawfully*, and *justifiably* we may.

3. But especially, and peculiarly, we will Adore him in our Closets, *Privasies*, and *Retirements*. We will Prostrate our selves before his Foot-Stool, and power our Souls unto him. We will review our lives, and enquire into the Errors, and disorders of them, we have reason to suspect that *all is not well*. God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men. We will search out those Sins, that have provoked the *Divine Indignation* against us, we will confess,

Humble,

Humble, and abase our selves before him, we will begg his Pardon, and hope he will not refuse us. We will get God of our side if we can. Quien a Dios tiene, todas las cosas tiene, y Quien a Dios no tiene, ninguna cosa tiene. He that hath God hath every thing, and he that hath not God hath nothing.

4. As we will take care of being Pious to God, so we will be careful to be just, and Righteous towards all Men. We will outrage no Mans Person, we inquire no Mans Estate, Reputation, Name, or Honour, but by the Grace of God, we will give to every one his Due. In breif we will Love our Neighbours, as our selves, and Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

5. In the conduct of our own Conversations, we shall observe the Laws of Prudence, Temperance, and Sobriety, we will have no Communion in the Licence, & Luxury of the Age, God hath made us Men, and we will not Live as Beasts, he hath given us reasonable faculties, and we will not abandon our selves to the conduct of our senses. We have been Baptised into the Christian Covenant, and we will not Live like Heathens, Infidels, and such as are manifestly Hypocrites, and Apostates from it.

6. The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, Teaching us, that denying all Ungodliness, and Worldly Lusts, we should Live Righteously, Seberly, and Godly, in this present World. This Doctrine we have been Taught and Learnt, and this we purpose, by Gods help, to Exemplifie in our Life.

SECT. 2.

1. We will preserve true Faith, and Allegiance to our Prince. We will never depart from the Duty we owe him, whatever Provocations, injury, and wrongs we may receive from his Servants, and Officers. We have so great an Opinion of his Clemency and Goodness, that we can never impute any of the Severities, that are exercised on us to his choice, or inclinations, if he knows any thing of them, or give any consent unto them, we must ascribe it to those Evil Characters, that are most impiously given of us, and that Force that is put upon his Royal Dispositions. For tis most certain, that the Subject, *bien Souvent Sentoit du mal per lamain des Serviteurs, encore qu'il n'y eust que bien en au cœur du Maistre*, doth oftentimes Suffer ill from the Hands of Servants, when the Master or Prince means them no Evil in the World.

2. If we Suffer, we will take care that we do not do it, as Evil Doers, and if we Suffer for well doing, we shall have the Apporbatation of God, and our Consciences, and the support of an innocent and upright mind,

mind, things in our opinion more *valuable*, than Crowns and Sep-
tters. We may be pretty well able to bear the rage and fury of Spite-
ful and malignant Persecutors, whilst our *Consciences* acquit us, and
we have the support of God; but if *Conscience* charge us with guilt, and
God depart away from us, we must fall under their indignations, and
utterly sink under the burden and weight of it.

3. A Few weak *enemies*, are more eligible than those that are ma-
ny and mighty. Those that Persecute us, are a few poor impotent mor-
tals; that must die and rot in the same common Earth with our selves;
but God and *Conscience* are powerful and Immortal, and tho they be
not numerically many, they are effectually more then all the World.
Persecutors may destroy the Body, but God can destroy Body and Soul
and cast both into Hell. Persecutors may afflict the outward Man, but
Conscience, like a Vicer, preys upon the Soul, to its unspeakable anguish.

4. If we may not have leave to serve God after our own way, with
the approbation, or at least the Connivence of the Government & Laws,
we shall not endeavour to prosecute it, by any unlawful Attempts
or Methods. If we be Prosecuted for worshipping the Great God, and
our Lord Jesus Christ, in a manner a little different from the Consti-
tutions of the Church, tho not from the appointments of Christ Jesus;
we will bear it, and commit our selves to him that judgeth uprightly.
*Magni vias, & potentes semel ulliscuntur propriis viribus: prober. &
innocente ipse Deus;* The great and the mighty revenge themselves.
but God avengeth the just and the innocent, saith Cardon, and to him
we leave it. We will be no Rebels however we may be reported,
or defamed. We will behave our selves, as it becometh the Religion
of the holy Jesus, however we be treated by our Enemies. We will
give demonstration (as we have done also already) that dissent in
some things from the Establish'd methods of Divine Worship, is con-
sistent with unspotted Loyalty, & *que ce ne sont choses encompotibles
d'estre bon Huguenot, & bon subject tout ensemble*, and that (to speak in
our English Dialect) 'tis not impossible to be a good Subject and a
Dissenter both together.

SECT. 3.

1. We will patiently bear what is thought fit to be laid upon us;
for tho we do not know that we have deserved those Severities from
the hands of Men, that have been, and may further be inflicted upon
us; yet we are sure we have deserved them all, and much more from
the Hands of God. You are but the Rod in the Hand of God, and tho
you may be unjust in persecuting and afflicting us, yet he is just in
permitting you so to do. Absalom was a Rebel in taking Arms against
his Father and his Prince, but God was very just in permitting it, as

Punishment for his Fathers Sins. Encore que Dieu n'ait point de part aux desseins des mechans & des meurtriers, il preside sur tous leurs conseils, & sur tous leurs entreprises, & il les dirige par son adorable providence. Although God have no hand in the designs of the mischievous and murderers, he presides over all their Counsels and Enterprises, and Governs them by an adorable providence. (*Drelincourt* in his Charitable Visits, Part 3. p. 137.

2. The *Physitian* makes use of the *gluttonous Appetite* of *Leeches*, and *Magistrates* make use of the *barbarous* and *inhuman* nature of *Hangmen* and *Executioners*, and God makes use of the *serene* rage and malice of *Persecutors*. Il s'en sert d'une façon admirable. He serves himself of them after an admirable manner; sometimes for the *Castigation* of his People, sometimes for their *trial*, sometimes for their *reformation*, and sometimes that he may take them away from the *evil* to come. Besides, we are all mortal, & il importe peu par quelle main nostre corps soit porté par terre, pourveu que nostre ame en sortant de ce co: p: soit porté par les Anges au Paradis celeste, And it matters not much, by what hand our Bodies be sent to the Grave, provided that our Soul, when it goes thence, be conveyed by Angels into the Heavenly Paradise.

3. But this is no *justification* of those that Persecute us, or excuse of their Sin and Wickedness. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and *Rulers* of the *Jews* did nothing, but what was according to the *Determinate Counsels* and purposes of God, but they were *barbarous* murderers for all that, for they did not put him to death, to serve the purpose and decree of God, but to satisfy their own *spite* and *revenge*. And we are pretty confident, that those that *assist* and *prosecute* us, will prove *Persecutors* at the last day, notwithstanding they do thereby nothing, but what accomplishes the *Counsels* of God. For we do believe, that their ends and Gods are not the same therein. God does it to *humble* and reform us, to wean us from the *World*, and to fix our hearts on *Heaven*. They do it to satisfy their *avarice*, their *revenge* and *Serpentine* hatred of all Religion and Godliness.

4. We hope this *free* and open declaring of our judgment and Resolutions, shall not be improved to our *disadvantage*, and that because we avow a purpose of *patient* Submission, that therefore our *burthens* shall be encreased. We hope it shall never be said, that since they make *such* professions of their *determinations*, to suffer what is imposed upon them, we will try them *effectually*. They shall have burthen enough. We have read of *Julian*, that when the *Christians* complained of the injuries, and oppressions they suffered from his

Officers,

Officers, he told them they were *obliged* to bear them, for such was the *Commandment* of their *God*. He excused the *outrages* that were offered to them, by telling them the *Laws* of their Religion, made it their *duty* to endure them. But we hope his *actions* shall never be drawn into *example*. We trust we shall never be *oppressed*, and our complaints answered by saying, You have promised *patiently* to bear what may be imposed upon you.

5. We will rather believe that our *Resolutions* of *Patience* and *Submission*, shall be our *Protection* against all *Injuries*, *Violence*, and *Oppression*. The *Humble*, the *modest*, and the *Peaceable*, should (we think) be treated with *Kindness* and *Favour*, when those only that are *Stubborn* and *Rebellious*, should be used with *Rigour*.

But be the *Issue* and *Event* of these our *Resolutions* for *Patience* and *Submission*, what they will; the *Practice* of it is our *Duty*, and that we must take care of, while the *Event* and *Effect* thereof is under the *Providence* and *Disposal* of *Heaven*, and appertains to *God*. We are obliged to obey the *Divine Commandments*; and to observe the *Laws* of *Patience*, *Self-denial*, *mortification*, *Heavenly-mindedness*, *Contempt* of the things that *Perish*, and others of the *like nature*; but whether the performance of them turn us to any *advantage* in this *World*, is a thing that we cannot *know*, nor must not *determine*, 'tis sufficient that they will be *rewardable* in that which is to *come*, and if we find it not *here*; (as we seldom do) we will hope for it *hereafter*.

SECT. 4:

1. We will endeavor to make some *advantage* by our *Afflictions* and *Calamities*. *Physicians* make useful *Medicines*, and *Extracts* out of things of *Venomous* and *Malignant* Nature, & there is almost nothing so *Vile* and *Mischievous*, which they do not turn to use, and Improve to the *benefit* of *Man*. The *Flesh* of *Vipers* is an ingredient in that excellent *Treacle* that expels *Poyson*; and is of use in inveterate *Head-aches*, *Pestilential*, and many other *Diseases*. *Quick-silver* (a thing sufficiently noxious in its own Nature) after due *preparation*, becomes useful in many *Distempers*, and where other things have failed, that hath been successful.

2. Since our *Goods* and *Estates* are taken from us, and we are not permitted the *Enjoyment* and *Possession* of them; we will endeavour to lay up our *Treasures* in *Heaven*, where no *Thieves* or *Robbers* can *Rise*, *Plunder*, or deprive us of them. We will do all the good that we can, whilst we are *here* below, and thereby lay in a good *Foundation* against the *World* to *come*, and what is laid up *there* we shall not doubt

to enjoy; for though we may be *Outraged, Spoiled, and Pillaged*, till we come to the *very Gates* of that *happy State*, we shall know *no such things* when once we are entred there.

3. If we be laid in *Goals*, and denied the Liberty of conversing with our *Friends*, we will fill up our leisure, and imploy our *Vacancies* in the Conversation of *God*; if we may not be permitted the *Society* of the *Saints* that are upon *Earth*, we will entertain our selves in the *Communion* of those that are in *Heaven*; though our *Bodies* be under restraint, our *Minds* will be at Liberty, and with them we will ascend on *High*, and make our approaches to the *City* of the *Living God*, the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, and to the *innumerable Company* of *Angels*, to the *general assembly*, and *Church* of the *first born*, to *God* the *Judge* of all, and to the *Spirits* of just *Men* made perfect. *Etsi corpus includitur, etsi caro detinetur, omnia Spiritui Patent.* Though the *Body* be shut up, and the *Flesh* under Bonds, all things lye open to the view and Consideration of the *Soul*. *Tertullian*, in *Lib. ad Hæreticos*.

4. When we are reviled, and defamed by the *blackest* and most *infamous* imputations, when we are compared with *Highland*, and border thence, when we are said to have made *equal* Defections from *Primitive Christianity* with the *Papists*, when we are reported to prostitute daily, the most *Sacred* *Rites* of Religion, to serve our *Secular* interests, and are said to be a *Scandal* to the *Christian Name*, we will satisfy our selves in the *Testimony* of our *Consciences*, and the approbation of *God*: We know these things to be *Gross*, and *Notorious* false; and therefore, when they are reported of us, we rejoice, hoping that our reward will be great in *Heaven*. *Illud maledictum contemnendum est, quod beatitudinem creat, quod falso maledicentis ore produciuntur.* *Jerome* in loco. Our Lord *Jesus* was reputed a *Wine bibber*, a *Friend* of *Publicans* and *Sinners*, a *Magician* and an *Enemy* to *Caesar*; the *Primitive Christians* were reported to have worshipped the *Head* of an *Ass*, they were accused of *Incest*, *Adultery*, *Eating* the *Flesh* of *Children*, and other things of like Nature, as may be seen in *Tertullian*, *Minutius*, *Felix*, and other of the *Ancients*; and if our *Saviour* and the most *Eminent* of his *Servants* were thus reproached, and belyed, we shall rejoyce in the *Fellowship* of their *Sufferings* and *Reproaches*, and in the hopes of *Participation* with them in their reward, and glory.

5. We are accounted and called the *Pests* of the Nation, we are thought unworthy to *Live* in the Land of our *Nativity*, we will therefore endeavour to prepare our selves for *Heaven*, and do hope, that

if

if we be exiled from *hence*, we may be received and admitted *there*. Our case were very sad, if those that *Persecute* us were *Lords* of the *other* World, in the same *manner*, *Degree*, and *Measure*, that they are of *this*. We might then expect as little *Favour* there as here. But blessed be the God of *Heaven*, those that may banish us from our *Houses*, *Lands*, and *Country*, cannot keep us from the *House* of God, nor from an Inheritance in the *Heavenly* Canaan.

6. And seeing we can find no *justice*, at the *Tribunals* of *Men*, we will appeal to that of *God*, who will judge the *World* in *righteousness* by the *Man* that he hath *Ordained*. And he is a *Judge* that accepteth not *Persons*, nor taketh *rewards*. And it will be time enough to be then declared *Innocent*, and have Sentence pass in our *Favour*, and we believe too timely and soon for our *Enemies*, and such as injure and oppress us. In the mean time, we will quietly wait the approach of that *great* Day, that will set all things at *Rights*, and give unto all *Men* as their works shall be, softly, and Calmely, saying, sometimes amidst our Afflictions, *How long Lord, how long?*

Sect. 5.

1. We will hope for *deliverance* out of our *Afflictions* in Gods due time. When God will deliver us, we do not pretend to know, nor is it our *interest*, or *advantage* to be acquainted therein, but thus much we think we may safely say, concerning it, when God shall have purged out our *Dross* and taken away our *Tin*, and when our *Enemies* and *Persecutors* shall have filled up the *Measure* of their *iniquities*, God will come down and deliver us. And truly could we encrease in *Holiness*, *Humility*, *Heavenly* mindedness, *Mortification*, contempt of the *World*, *Love* to God, and *Man*, and all other the *Fruits* of the *Spirit*, as fast as they do in *Malice*, *Spight*, *Envy*, *Rage*, *Oppression*, *Injustice*, *Hatred* of God, and all good *Men*, with other the works of the *Flesh*, we might reasonably hope that the *Evil* Day would not be of any long *Duration*.

2. As we do not know when God will deliver us, neither do we know by what means or *Instruments*, he will accomplish it, nor have we any *anxious* thoughts about it, we know Gods *Arm* is not shortened that it cannot *Save*, nor his *Ear* heavy that it cannot *Hear*. God never wants *Means* to accomplish his own *Counsels*, when the *fulness* of time is come, he can make those that are our greatest *Enemies*, either with or besides their intentions, the *Instruments* of our *Redemption* and *Deliverance*. In the *Reign* of *Charles* the *Fifth*, the *German* *Protestants* were lamentably outraged & oppressed; he employed all the *Power* of *Spain*, *Italy*, and *Germany*, for their *Ruin*, he beat them

in

in many *Battels*, took the *Heads* and *Principal Persons* of that *Perswaſion* Prisoners, and had Reduced them to that condition, that only the City of *Magdeburgh* stood out, and made opposition to his *Arms*. In conclusion, those that assisted to spoil and destroy them, formed a confederation against him, by means whereof some *Liberty* was granted to them, for the Exercise of their *Religion*, and a Period put to their *Miseries* and *Calamities*; at least in good degree and measure. For this, those that please may consult *Sleiden* in his *Comentarios*.

3. 'Tis possible that those that now *Persecute* us, with so much rage and indignation, may calm and moderate their passions, and put on some bowels of compassion towards us. *St. Paul* was as serious a Zealot as most of them. He shut up many of the *Saints* in Prison, having received Authority from the chief *Priests*; and when they were put to Death, he gave his voice against them. He punished them oft in every *Synagogue*, and compelled to *Blaspheme*, and being exceeding mad against them, he Persecuted them to strange Cities. *Videte istum virum, una voce Domini ex Persecutore factum predicatorum.* Behold this Man, by one word of God, of a Persecutor, made a Preacher. *August. in homilia sexta. Tom. 5.*

4. This is but one of those many ways, that lye open to the view of that God, whose understanding is infinite, by which we may be delivered. It becomes us not to prescribe to him, either the time or method, and means of our deliverance. Let him do it when, and how he pleases; we will hope for it, and with *Patience* and *Resignation*, expect it in his time, and whenever it comes, we will receive it thankfully and give him all the praise of it. And if we should ever live to see that time, we will love God and Religion never the less, remembering that the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect by sufferings, and that if any Man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer Persecutions. *Populus Diaboli persequitur populum Christi; dum adulteri persequuntur Castos, infestantur sobrios ebriosi, hominibus insidiantur superbi, benignos invidiosi, largos cupidi, & eos qui mansuetudinem vel patientiam retinent, affligere non desinunt iracundi.* *August. Tom. 10. p. 777.*

SECT. 6.

Whilst our Afflictions continue, we will hope that our Supports and Consolations shall continue; and if the one abound, we will hope that the other shall abound also. Hitherunto God hath helped us; he hath been with us in Prisons, and in Dungeons we have had experience of the light of his Countenance. *Plus in carcere Spiritus acquirit, quam amittit Caro.* Our Bodily losses have been abundantly compensated by the Spiritual advantages that we have found there. *Dominus glo-*

viam suam discipulis suis in solitudine demonstravit; Our Lord revealed his Glory to his Disciples in solitude, saith *Tertullian*, and to us hath he communicated of his Holy Spirit in Goals and Restraints. *Hoc præstat carcer Christiano, quod eremus Prophetis*; A Prison is of the same use to a Christian, that a Wilderness was to the Prophets. *Anferamus carceris nomen, secussum vocemus*. Let us not call it a Prison, but a place of Privacy and Recess, in which we are at leisure to converse with God, and where we do never fail to find him.

2. We have suffered with Joy the *spoiling of our Goods*, we have seen our Houses *rified*, and the Utensils and Furniture of them taken from us, by unmerciful and cruel Men; and all this with a calm and undisturbed Mind. We have, and do remember, that our Lord Jesus had not where to lay his head; and we do not think it very likely, that our Persecutors will leave us *meaner* than the Son of God; who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich; and when we do consider and cast these things to mind, we do easily permit the Spoilers to Plunder and impoverish us, rejoycing in being made conformable to our Lord.

3. If God shall think fit to add to our *Burnings*, we shall hope that he will add to our *Strength*; and if our *Calamities* do encrease upon us, we shall verily believe that he will also add to the nature and quality of our Joys. If we must pass through the Rivers and Waters, we do not doubt, but that God will take care that they shall not overflow us; If we must walk through the Fire, we will trust in God that we shall not be burnt, nor shall the Flame kindle upon us. If the Majesty of Heaven will be with us, and Comfort and Support us in our Afflictions, (and we have no reason to distrust him) we shall have no cause to complain of the greatness or weight of them. *Mas quiero ser atormentado en el profundo del infierno, teniendo tu divina gracia, que gozar de tu gloria con tu offensa*. I had rather be tormented in the lowest Hell with the Saviour, than enjoy all the Glory of Heaven with the offence and displeasure of God, says a devout Spaniard.

SECT. 7.

1. We will Love and Pray for our *Enemies*, this was commanded and exemplified by our Saviour; He prayed for those that Murdered him, saying, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*; we shall endeavour to imitate him therein. *Amicos diligere omnium est, inimicos solum Christianorum*. All men love their Friends, but 'tis peculiar to Christians only to love their Enemies. *Tertul. ad Scavulam. Deligere inimicos tantum Christianorum virtus*. S. August. To love Enemies is a Vertue found only among Christians. And we are of opinion, that

that is impossible to be a Christian without it, and therefore 'tis very much our Interest as well as our Duty, to live in the Exercise and Practice of it, and by the Grace of God, we find no great difficulty therein. When we consider how many Hundred Talents God hath forgiven us, we can easily remit a few to our angry Persecuting Brethren.

2. As we do forgive all the injustice, violence, cruelty and oppression, that they have exercised towards us, so we shall heartily beg of God to remit and forgive it, and all other Sins that they stand guilty of before him. It shall be our hearts desire and prayer, that none of their transgressions may rise up in judgment against them to their Condemnation; but that they may receive a full discharge, and absolution of all, and every one of them.

3. We will suppose, they will confess themselves guilty of sins against God, but whether they will acknowledge themselves faulty in any thing they have done against us, we do not know. Our Saviour told his Disciples, that *those that killed them should think that they did God good service*, and 'tis not improbable, but that our enemies may be of the same opinion; but we have other apprehensions, and will be bold to say, that if those *fromless lies* that are reported of us, and those barbarous outrages that are committed against us, and that *spite and malice* wherewith they persecute us, be service to God, we know not what it is to serve the Devil. Persecution is an invention of the Devil, and he is the great desirer and promoter of it. *Athanasius in Apol. ad Constantium pag. 716.*

4. We will make one *Supplication* in we on their behalf, and that shall be, That God will please to reform and amend their nature and their lives. This we conceive will be a very useful and necessary request, seeing St. Paul affirms that *without holiness no man can see God*, and our Saviour saith, that *unless a man be born of God, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. We shall rejoice in their Conversation and Reformation, and be very glad to meet them in the Kingdom of Heaven. We except not the very vilest and most mischievous of our Persecutors, who find our selves under no temptation to wish them any evil, unless they think it an evil to be truly penitent, that they may be saved, which we do wish them with all our hearts, Heaven is sufficiently large to receive both them and us, that they and we both Repent, for their Advancement and advantage will be no prejudice or diminution to our Happiness and Glory.

ERRATA.

Page 6. line 7. for *savor* read *favor*, and add *such* before *sense*, l. 8. for *search*, r. *secure*. p. 13. l. 3. for *insolent*; r. *insolvent*. p. 25. l. 2. for *Tranfsactions* r. *Transgressions*. lin. penult. for *allow* r. *atone*. Most of the other Errata's are only literal, which the Reader will easily discern.

FINIS.

111



